

TERMS OF REFERENCE - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Extension of Call for Applications

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

The UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean calls for applications for the partial renewal of the regional Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG):

Objective

Renew seven (7) members of the Civil Society Advisory Group for UN Women Latin America and the Caribbean: one (1) from the non-Spanish speaking countries of the Caribbean; two (2) from Mexico and Central America; one (1) from the Andean Countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela); and three (3) from Brazil and the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

Membership of the regional CSAG is in an individual capacity and unpaid.

Application deadline

20 April 2020.

I. Nature and background

The United Nations General Assembly, when creating the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), requested that it continue the existing practice of conducting effective consultation with civil society organizations and encouraged them to make a significant contribution to the work of the Entity (RES. A /64/289). In relation to this, the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 indicates that *“Civil society organizations, in particular women’s organizations, play a vital role in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN-Women’s longstanding relation with the women’s movement gives it the opportunity to bring their voices, capacities and contributions in support of gender equality and women’s empowerment, notably to those most likely to be left behind.”*

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

As established by the Preliminary Strategy of UN Women for Civil Society Advisory Groups (developed in November 2015), CSAGs constitute an institutional mechanism for regular dialogue between UN Women and leaders of women's organizations and the feminist movement on priorities and key issues relating to gender equality. The aim of the groups is to provide UN Women with information about perspectives on strategic policies and intergovernmental and normative processes, while at the same time being a channel through which to consult with civil society. CSAG members are eminently qualified civil society activists with a diverse experience and knowledge in UN Women priority areas.

In summary, the CSAG has a double and complementary role: as an advisory body to UN Women at the regional level and as an advocacy platform to advance the agenda of gender equality, women's empowerment and rights.

In its advisory role, the CSAG serves as a fundamental coordination space for UN Women in the region, providing an opportunity for structured dialogue with a small, but relevant, group of civil society. This is complemented with other informal channels of dialogue, as well as the joint identification of innovative initiatives, strategies and perspectives on national public policy and the progress in the implementation of the regional cooperation frameworks. In its advocacy role, the CSAG contributes to the joint objectives of promoting gender equality, women's rights and empowerment, pushing for progress in the implementation of internationally agreed development goals.

The Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (CSAG-LAC) was established in May 2012 as a result of a rigorous selection process to which nearly 120 highly qualified women and men applied. The final selection was made by their own peers in civil society. Fifteen members and three permanent observers, as well as four substitute applicants (one for each sub-region), were selected. With the aim of guaranteeing the continual functioning of the Advisory Group, a proportion of its members fulfil their roles for a period of three years. In 2014, half of the group was renewed, with seven new members starting. In the second semester of 2016, the group was partially renewed again. The eight members remaining from the original group left and four new members were selected through a public call for applications. The group has had 11 members in total since 2018. In this call for applications, seven (7) new members will be selected: one (1) from the non-Spanish speaking countries of the Caribbean; two (2) from Mexico and Central America; one (1) from the Andean Countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela); and three (3) from Brazil and the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay).

Currently the CSAG is represented by organizations from the following four sub-regions: Mexico and Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean Countries, Brazil and the Southern Cone.

The Advisory Group meets in person once a year and virtually every two months, holding regular meetings with the Regional Director.¹

¹ The first face-to-face meeting of the CSAG-LAC took place in October 2012 in Panama, with the aim of producing specific recommendations for UN Women's work to feed into the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The second meeting took place in October 2013 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in the run-up to the XII ECLAC Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (focused on gender equality, women's empowerment and ICT) and the Forum of Feminist Organizations (a space to debate, develop and make women's voices heard in the plenary 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, the main aim of which was to develop a Work Plan for 2015, as well as how to evaluate the group and future in terms of action. The fourth face-to-face meeting was held in January 2016 in Santiago de Chile in the run-up to the regional consultation prior to CSW60 2016, to be jointly organized by ECLAC and UN Women. The fifth face-to-face meeting was held in the run-up to the XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean in Uruguay (25 to 28 October 2016). The sixth face-to-face meeting was held in February 2017 in Santiago de Chile in the run-up to the regional consultation prior to CSW61 2017. The seventh face-to-face meeting took place in February 2018 in the Dominican Republic in the run-up to the regional consultation prior to CSW62 2018. The eighth face-to-face meeting was held in Buenos Aires in December 2018, together with the regional consultation prior to CSW63. Finally, the ninth meeting was held in Santiago de Chile in January 2020 prior to the Feminist Forum on Beijing +25 and the Regional Conference on Women.

II. Objectives

✓ Advise and advocate for policy and programme development at the regional level in Latin America and the Caribbean based on the expertise, perspectives and knowledge of civil society and promote sustainable partnerships between UN Women and civil society to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

✓ Advocate and participate in intergovernmental processes and platforms. The role of UN Women is to provide opportunities for dialogue between the CSAGs and other relevant stakeholders or decision-making fora. Contribute to the effective implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Development Agenda. Act as front-line partners of UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean and create a network of solidarity across civil society to coordinate efforts with UN Women in order to accelerate action, advocacy and sustainable outcomes for the achievement of equality gender in 2030.

III. Role

a) Advisory role:

✓ Provide strategic advice, individually or collectively, to UN Women - and to other bodies where appropriate - regarding thematic priorities and political topics, including the strategic planning process.

✓ Provide information and guidance on the evolution and political, economic, social and cultural trends for the programming of UN Women at the regional level.

✓ Provide analysis of the socio-economic and political environment at the regional level and its impact on gender equality and women's human rights.

✓ Provide contributions to UN Women's programmes and policies.

✓ Provide guidance and contributions to regional strategies for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

b) Advocacy role:

✓ Provide assistance to UN Women to strengthen the relationship and dialogue with civil society at all levels.

✓ Participate and influence normative processes and intergovernmental platforms such as the CSW or the Regional Conference on Women, among others.

✓ Create a network of civil society solidarity to coordinate efforts with UN Women to accelerate action and advocacy for the achievement of gender equality in 2030.

✓ Contribute to the effective implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Development Agenda and other international objectives directly linked to the UN Women mandate that are agreed on a regional and international level.

IV. Composition:

The Civil Society Advisory Group for UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (CSAG-LAC) will comprise eleven (11) members with recognized field experience along with proven experience in areas related to gender equality and women's human rights and empowerment. The members represent gender equality networks, women's and feminist organizations, as well as other non-governmental and grassroots organizations that work on, among other issues: youth, indigenous people, , Afro-descendants, women's human rights, climate change, innovation, economic empowerment and different gender identities, and are committed to the values of the United Nations.

In all cases, members must have recognized capacities in activism with proven strong connections with women's networks and organizations at national, regional or global levels.

The composition will be as follows:

✓ 8 members of gender equality networks, women's and feminist organizations (intermediate or grassroots). The geographical balance will be ensured by at least two members of each of the sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean: 1) The Caribbean (Anglo and French); 2) Mexico and Central America; 3) Brazil and the Southern Cone; and 4) Andean Countries.

✓ 3 experts in one of the impact areas and priorities of UN Women in the region (leadership and political participation, prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls, peace and security, gender-responsive statistics and budgets, economic empowerment, climate change, innovation). This is not exclusively for academics, but also people who are endorsed by research institutes or feminist or human rights organizations and other organizations that show proven experience in the region.

The Group shall include members with experience at the grassroots level that represent diverse development and feminist perspectives. Special attention will be given to the nominations of young people to promote intergenerational dialogue, as well as representatives of indigenous and Afro-descendant women's groups.

V. Length of mandate

Members of the CSAG assume a two-year mandate in a personal capacity. To ensure continuity, a proportion of the members of the group will serve a maximum of three years in total, by decision of the Group.

VI. 2020 Selection criteria

A total of seven (7) people will be selected in this call for applications. To ensure balance between those members who already form part of the Advisory Group and the new members, the selection process will pay special attention to the following criteria (minimum 4):

1. Belonging to one of the following sectors or populations: young people (under 30 years old), indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, rural, women living with HIV, LGBTIQ, actively participating in regional or global women's and or feminist movement.

2. Active participation in groups and have enough time to be able to monitor activities, develop with initiatives and respond to Consultations. On average, a minimum availability of at most 8 hours per month is required. If you work in an organization or institution, attach a letter from your employer that authorizes you to be available for this minimum % of time from your role to participate in the group.

3. Thematic experience in at least two of the UN Women impact and priority areas in the region (leadership and political participation, prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls, peace and security, gender-responsive statistics and budgets, economic empowerment, climate change, innovation).

4. Experience in working with public policy, legislation and/or human rights treaties will be valued, particularly if the experience is at a regional or international level.

5. Academic experience and research, particularly in one of the UN Women priority themes.

6. Have a wide presence and proven active participation in women's and feminist movement spaces at the regional level.

7. Strong connection with women's or feminists' networks and organizations at regional or national level working on themes within UN Women's area of expertise and with extensive experience in promoting gender equality and women's human rights at the national and/or regional level and on development policies.

8. Proven understanding and experience of the needs and interests of the various groups of women, particularly in the Global South.

9. Knowledge of the different development models and the differences between middle-income countries and less developed countries.

10. In order to guarantee neutrality, and in accordance with the ethical standards of the United Nations, members must not be members of boards of directors of political parties, hold public office or be elected. In case of being elected to public office after their selection as members of the CSAG-LAC, a resignation letter must be sent to the group and the membership will be terminated before their appointment.

11. Those who, at the time of the application, are still part of national or global advisory groups of UN Women are not eligible.

12. Commitment to the mandate of UN Women and the United Nations Charter to carry out this work.

This call for nominations will be disseminated among and by the networks and organizations of women and civil society in the region

VII. Operating Framework: Planned activities for CSAG-Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Meet in person once a year, preferably in the run-up to the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, or other events of high relevance for the gender equality agenda at the regional and global level.

2. Participate in virtual meetings every two months with a thematic agenda previously agreed with the UN Women Regional Director and the Regional Office team.

3. Maintain continuous communications virtually, contributing to the work of the group. In case of a temporary problem that prevents or limits your participation, you must notify the group. A member may also be in contact on their own initiative or at the request of the regional group with the CSAGs at national and global level and must inform the Group of the activity carried out and outcomes.

4. Contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the bi-annual work plan and development of a new plan as required. The plan must have specific objectives, actions and time frames and contribute to the priorities of UN Women. Virtual thematic dialogues will be included as actions in the plan.

The UN Women Regional Office will have, depending on budget availability, an Advisory Group facilitator, who will be in charge of coordinating virtual and face-to-face meetings, guiding and organizing the Group's discussions and processes and serving as a regular liaison between the Group and the Regional Office for specific issues.

VII. Products

1. Specific recommendations to UN Women (product of face-to-face and virtual meetings).
2. Work plan.
3. Virtual dialogue reports.
4. Bi-monthly meeting minutes.
5. Reports and/or documents providing guidance to UN Women.
6. Reports informing of participation in meetings and activities, in representation of the Group.

VIII. Selection Committee

The selection process will be led by Committee comprised of four Civil Society members, one from each sub-region and two UN Women representatives as facilitators, who will evaluate the candidates. The Selection Committee will make decisions by consensus.

IX. Requirements

Interested candidates should send the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae. No more than 5 pages.
2. Professional profile (short CV) that summarizes professional training and work experience, and experience in the women's/feminist movement.
3. Duly signed letter of interest that sets out the reasons for the application and what you can contribute to the Advisory Group.
4. Reference from at least one feminist or women's organization, or a formally established organization focused on human rights or women's equality, with at least a five-year track record, issued by the relevant signing authority.
5. Time availability letter subscribed by the relevant signing authority, if the applicant is employed full time in a civil society organization/institution. The letter will not be necessary should employment be part time in nature.

All applications should be sent to the following e-mail before the specified deadline: gasc.rolac@unwomen.org

Applications can be submitted in Spanish, Portuguese, French or English.