**Terms of Reference**

**UN Women Regional Civil Society Advisory Group**

**Europe and Central Asia Regional Office**

Background

At the time that the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was established, the United Nations General Assembly requested the head of the Entity to “continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations and encourage their meaningful contribution to the work of the Entity”  (General Assembly resolution 64/289).  In response to this request, UN Women has set up civil society advisory groups at the global, regional and national levels to build on existing partnerships and increase strategic dialogue with civil society partners in countries, regionally and internationally. Civil society is one of UN Women’s most important constituencies - providing a dynamic source for ideas and policy perspectives, partnerships and support for the organization - which can assist UN Women in achieving its strategic goals. Closely linked is the vital role played by civil society in advancing shared objectives in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In line with its global directive, UN Women established two sub-regional Civil Society Advisory Groups in 2012/2013 – one for Central Asia and one for Central and Southeastern Europe. Following the establishment of UN Women’s Europe and Central Asia [ECA] Regional Office in Istanbul in 2014, UN Women will be establishing a new regional Europe and Central Asia Regional Civil Society Advisory Group [ECA CSAG].

Objectives

The ECA CSAG will be a consultative forum for regular dialogue between UN Women and civil society in the Europe and Central Asia region. The goals for the group are:

* To enable UN Women to consult with civil society and draw upon the rich and diverse expertise, experience, outreach and networks, perspective and knowledge that civil society can offer.
* To foster dialogue and engagement, with a view to advancing goals of gender equality and women’s empowerment.
* To serve as a consultative forum of ideas and strategies for UN Women’s programming, including identification of the most pertinent and emerging gender equality issues in the region

Scope of Work

The UN Women ECA CSAG is being established to facilitate effective, on-going and structured consultations between civil society and UN Women at a regional level. Rotating every two years, this Advisory Group will focus on the provision of strategic perspectives on advocacy issues, strengthening UN Women’s engagement with civil society and supporting, as relevant, intergovernmental processes and forums.

As a consultative forum for regular dialogue between civil society and UN Women, the ECA CSAG will:

1. provide strategic advice to UN Women on the realization of its overall vision and mandate in the ECA region, including on its thematic priorities and policies;
2. provide guidance and analysis on political, economic, social and cultural developments and trends in the ECA region, as they pertain to women’s rights and gender equality;
3. provide guidance and analysis on the sustainable development dialogue related to the MDG/Post 2015 Agenda and Beijing +20 review and its impact on gender equality and women’s rights from a regional perspective
4. provide input to UN Women’s regional and sub-regional programmes and policies, including to strategic planning instruments such as the ECA Regional Strategic Note and Annual Work Plan;
5. provide guidance and inputs to regional advocacy strategies for ECA;
6. act as a platform for engagement with the broader women’s movement in the region.

Composition:

The ECA CSAG will be composed of a maximum of 20 individuals with proven and distinguished track records in the areas of gender equality, women’s empowerment and sustainable development. The Group’s composition must ensure that the diversity of women in the region is represented. Members will be drawn from gender equality networks, women’s organizations, academia, as well as other non-governmental and grassroots organizations which are committed to the core values of the United Nations.

The composition of the ECA CSAG, will be as follows, ensuring representation from a number of countries, particularly those countries where UN Women has not established a country-level Civil Society Advisory Group:

* 4 members from Eastern Europe;
* 4 members from Central Asia;
* 6 members from Central and Southeastern Europe,;
* 4 members from the Caucasus;
* 2 members from other European countries.

Applications are sought from an individual nominating his/her candidature or from a network/coalition of NGOs nominating a CSAG members. In all cases, members of the ECA CSAG will be individuals with proven credentials of influence and participation in civil society organizations and activism. They will serve in their personal capacity for a period of two years. After the period of two years, should they be nominated again, they can be selected for an additional term of two years.

Membership in the group is honorary and members will receive no remuneration. However, UN Women will cover all travel expenses related to members’ attendance of CSAG meetings.

Nomination and Selection Process:

To ensure a transparent and regionally representative process, UN Women is requesting Expressions of Interest and this call will be circulated via the UN Women global website and through non-governmental networks and organizations, ensuring outreach to those countries where UN Women does not have a country-level CSAG.

A **selection committee** comprised of key UN Women staff from the Regional Office, ECA Country Offices and HQ, a member of the Global CSAG and an independent expert from the ECA region, will be constituted to make recommendations. Members of the Selection Committee must not be affiliated with organizations from which expression of interest may be received. The selection process will be duly documented ensuring transparency.

The selection committee will assess expressions of interest and make recommendations using the following criteria:

* strong connection to regional, sub-regional or national women’s organizations and networks, concerned with matters within the UN Women mandate and with extensive experience in regional, sub-regional or national advocacy and policy development;
* strong connection to regional, sub-regional, national, non-governmental or academia networks concerned with matters of sustainable development;
* demonstrable understanding of the needs and interests of diverse groups of women, including those who are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination;
* thematic expertise in UN Women’s impact areas, as defined in UN Women’s Strategic Plan [2014-2017]
* understanding of different development realities, including work in conflict, post-conflict, and transition countries;
* experience in policy, legislation and/or human right treaties is valued, particularly at the regional/international level;
* **Qualified men, as well as individuals from minority groups, ROMA, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities or representing the most disadvantaged groups are encouraged to apply**
* in order to ensure neutrality and in compliance with UN ethical standards, members shall not be engaged in active politics, such as elections, political parties, etc;
* ensure inclusion of grassroots organizations and networks;
* ensure representation of young men and women in the ECA CSAG;
* individuals cannot be members of more than one CSAG.

Structure and Operational Framework

The ECA CSAG will be managed by UN Women’s ECA Regional Office in Istanbul, Turkey. It will meet biannually and will ensure opportunities for more regular engagement with UN Women’s ECA Regional Director and senior staff through other means. The ongoing collaboration with UN Women will take place via a web-based platform [the Civil Society Extranet] set up by UN Women, for group members to engage with each other and with national UN Women CSAGs in the region,[[1]](#footnote-1) as well as with other UN Women CSAGs as necessary. In addition, members of the CSAG will be given an opportunity to engage and contribute to the inter-governmental processes, regional thematic meetings and forums. Network meetings, tele/Skype conferences in the margin of the Regional CSAG meeting and beyond will be organized, as appropriate.

Language: 2 UN official languages will be used as means of communication with CSAG members, English and Russian

**UN WOMEN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORTY GROUP:**

**APPLICATION FORM**

1. Family name: First name:
2. Nationality:
3. Telephone:
4. E-email:
5. Permanent Address:
6. Sex:

Male

Female

1. Applying as a member of (please check the ones that are appropriate):

Women’s equality network

Women’s organizations

Grassroots organizations

Academia

As an individual

Other

1. Representing interests of (please check the ones that are appropriate):

ROMA or ethnic minority groups (please specify):

Rural women

Gender activists

Persons living with/affected by HIV/AIDS

Persons with disabilities

Girls and adolescents

Others

1. Are your currently affiliated with an organization? If yes, please explain the nature of the work you do within this organization, how it is linked to gender equality and women’s empowerment issues in the ECA region?
2. What is your area of expertise? (Please link it specifically to UN Women’s regional priority areas: violence against women, gender-responsive budgeting, economic empowerment, leadership and participation, peace and security)
3. Why do you believe you are a suitable candidate to be a part of the UN WOMEN ECA Regional Civil Society Advisory Group?
4. Additional remarks, if any

Signed: Date:

Please send your application and CV to [eca.operations@unwomen.org](mailto:eca.operations@unwomen.org) and NOT later than 18 September 2014 and indicate “**ECA CSAG**” in your email subject line.

1. To date UN Women national Civil Society Advisory Groups have been established and are operational in five countries in the ECA region: Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan [↑](#footnote-ref-1)