

Terms of Reference

UN Women Regional Civil Society Advisory Group

Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

Background

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, and peace and security.

The four-year Strategic Note (2019-2022) for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECA RO) outlines strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls across the region in five key areas: women's leadership and political participation; women's economic empowerment; elimination of violence against women and girls; peace, security and humanitarian action; and support to intergovernmental processes. The UN Women ECA RO Strategic Note is fully guided by the UN Women Corporate Strategic Plan (2018-2021)¹.

UN Women ECA RO supports strengthening and implementing norms and standards aligned to intergovernmental processes through the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, relevant UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and other applicable UN instruments and resolutions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides a comprehensive roadmap for the future of people, planet and prosperity. In achieving a "Planet 50-50 by 2030" requires collective leadership at all levels - global, regional and national - to address the challenges that are holding women and girls back from reaching their full potential. The civil society is a fundamental part of this collective effort. For UN Women, civil society is a strategic partner with a dynamic source of ideas and perspectives aimed at strengthening solidarity and the feminist movement building, including the grassroots movements from a ***leave no one behind perspective***.

¹ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021>

Year 2020 is a pivotal year for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere. It marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (B+25) where UN Women ECA RO partners with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) are supporting countries in their national and regional reviews, and will conduct regional consultations on B+25 progress between 29-30 October 2019. Outcomes of ECA regional and sub-regional reviews, dialogue forums and intergovernmental processes will feed into the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2020 and into a special session of the General Assembly in September 2020. Year 2020 is also UN Women's 10th anniversary, the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the last decade of the 2030 Agenda.

UN Women ECA RO continues to partner with civil society for support to achieve its strategic goals and fulfill its mandate on gender equality and women's empowerment. It seeks inspiration from the dynamic and creative side of civil society, which is able to forge collective identities and alliances, and create informal networks, initiatives and social movements to articulate social concerns. UN Women ECA RO in 2015 established its first regional Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) as a rotating consultative body for dialogue around its policy, programming and intergovernmental activities. It was emphasized that UN Women ECA RO must continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society to ensure their meaningful contribution to the work of UN Women.

Mobilizing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), women's organizations and activists on the ground to ensure their full participation and involvement in, and contribution to B+25, CSW and SDGs related processes and dialogues is a priority for UN Women ECA RO under its Strategic Note for 2019-2021. In supporting and strengthening social mobilization and movement building for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, UN Women ECA RO intends to facilitate, catalyze and enable broad civil society and public engagement, drawing on its convening capacity and partnerships with civil society and stakeholders within the region.

Towards this, UN Women ECA RO is renewing and re-establishing the regional CSAG for a three-year period, revising the Terms of Reference and updating its composition with new members to ensure the Group is well positioned to work together with UN Women in the normative and intergovernmental areas.

Objectives of the Regional ECA Civil Society Advisory Group

As stated in the UN Women's Corporate Strategy for the Civil Society Advisory Groups (developed in 2015)², the CSAGs are an institutional mechanism with a double and complementary role - as advisors to UN Women and as advocates for the realization of the gender equality agenda. Having both the advisory and advocacy roles, UN Women and ECA CSAG Members will draw upon each others' initiatives, ideas, and policy perspectives to advance regional gender equality goals.

² <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/1/civil-society-advisory-groups-csag-strategy>

UN Women will work with the ECA CSAG for advocacy and political strategies at the regional level so that larger gains can be forged for the gender equality movement, taking it beyond country borders.

The ECA CSAG will work with UN Women ECA RO and share its concern, vision, strategies and call for actions, and use UN Women networks and conveying power to share messages from civil society at the regional and global levels, during high-level policy discussions and intergovernmental processes.

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

- To enable UN Women to consult with, and foster dialogue with civil society and draw upon the rich and diverse expertise, experience, outreach and networks, perspective and knowledge that civil society can offer with a particular focus on gender equality and women's empowerment related intergovernmental processes and dialogues (B+25 review; Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, High-Level Political Forum on SDGs, annual CSW sessions, etc.).
- To serve as a consultative forum of ideas and strategies for UN Women's advocacy, normative and programmatic work in line with the most pertinent and emerging gender equality issues in the ECA region.
- Serve as an advocacy and solidarity platform with established voices and sustained engagement to influence the regions gender equality agenda, and leverage outreach to higher level decision making and discussions, and expand messages and work with other constituencies and partners at country, regional and global levels.

Scope of Work

The UN Women ECA CSAG is renewing its membership and composition to facilitate effective, on-going and structured consultations between civil society and UN Women at a regional level.

Rotating every three years, ECA CSAG 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, particularly in the regional review of B+25.

In optimizing the work of ECA CSAG, UN Women ECA RO will:

- I. **Strengthen the functioning** of ECA CSAG to facilitate coordinated dialogue and actions on crucial gender equality issues and topics of national, regional and global significance
- II. **Enhance conversations** with ECA CSAG Members and encourage enriched communication flows and solidarity on themes and topics related to gender equality and women's empowerment
- III. **Support delivering messages** of civil society to UN Agencies, development partners, governments and intergovernmental bodies

- IV. **Promote Inter-CSAG Alliances** between Members of ECA CSAG and National CSAGs to contribute to coordinated actions and improving the influence of CSAG Members at global, regional and country levels with common advocacy and information sharing on gender equality goals

(See Annex I for Scope of Work - Working Modalities and Principles)

Composition (Who can be a Member of ECA CSAG)

Members of ECA CSAG must be eminent civil society representatives with strong credentials as gender equality advocates, a proven record within the women's movement and understanding of the UN and UN Women context, priorities and mandates.

Members will be selected among gender equality leaders who are strong, progressive and hail from the following categories: women CSOs, networks and alliances; male gender equality advocates; youth activists and leaders with a track record of work on gender equality; women activists that work on intersectional issues (such as climate change); advocates and leaders of minority and marginalized groups (representing persons with disability, LGBTI, and Roma, Ashkali and indigenous communities); Labor/Trade Union leaders; feminist strategists from think-tanks, feminist media leaders and advocates; female professionals working on women empowerment (such as women academicians, women artists, women's wellbeing practitioners) and leaders from progressive and feminist faith based organizations.

In order to preserve the integrity and autonomy of ECA CSAG as a civil society group of eminent women's rights advocates and gender equality leaders, people who have a direct representation role with the private sector, political parties and are members of government or government bodies cannot become ECA CSAG Members. The Group will include a strong number of youth advocates (at least 30%).

The ECA CSAG will be composed of a maximum of 20 individuals and will ensure representation from a number of countries, particularly those countries where UN Women has not established a country-level CSAG:

- 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.

ECA CSAG Members join the advisory groups as eminent individuals and not as representatives of their organizations; while they bring the strength of their organization and constituency to ECA CSAG, they will operate in their individual capacity as a gender equality leader.

The appointment will be for a fixed period of time, on a renewable basis and their membership is rotational. They may belong to organizations that are responsible parties of UN Women. However, special attention will be given to avoid any conflict of interest. ECA CSAG Members will not have any oversight, monitoring or decision-making role in UN Women's programming activities.

Members must be able to devote time and attention to participate in this body, and should actively engage with other Members (national, regional and global) and provide valuable inputs to the work as needed. 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 ECA CSAG meetings.

Nomination and Selection Process

The UN Women ECA RO launches a 'Call for Nominations' for the renewal of its ECA CSAG and election of new Members. Applications are sought from individuals nominating their candidature or from a network/coalition of NGOs nominating them as a ECA CSAG Members (See Annex II for the Application Form). In all cases, Members will serve in their personal capacity for a period of three years. After the period of three years, should they be nominated again, they can be selected for an additional term of three years.

To ensure a transparent and regionally representative process, UN Women is requesting expressions of interest. The 'Call for Nominations' will be circulated through the UN Women global website and non-governmental networks and organizations, ensuring outreach to those regional countries where UN Women does not have a country-level CSAG.

A **selection committee** will be constituted where Members will be comprised of: key UN Women staff from ECA RO and Country Offices; Headquarters; one representative from the Executive Director's Global CSAG; and one independent expert from the ECA region. 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 UN Women's mandate and 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 (2018-2021);
- 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;
- Experience in providing strategic advice by using data and analyzing overall trends;
- Experience in developing creative ideas which address gender equality issues, especially using a holistic methodology or specializing on priority areas, or the areas that are most neglected;
- Young women, men and LGBTI who actively address gender equality issues using latest technologies and social media channels are encouraged to apply;
- Qualified men, as well as individuals from minority groups, ROMA, indigenous groups, persons with disabilities, LGBTI 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.;
- Inclusion of grassroots organizations and networks will be ensured;
- Representation of young women, men and LGBTI in the ECA CSAG will be ensured;
- Individuals cannot be members of more than one CSAG.

Structure and Operational Framework

The ECA CSAG will be managed by UN Women’s ECA RO in Istanbul, Turkey. It will meet in person annually and will ensure opportunities for more regular engagement with UN Women’s ECA Regional Director and senior staff through virtual meetings.

In addition to collaborating with UN Women, CSAG Members will engage with each other and with Members of national CSAGs in the region³ as well as with other UN Women CSAGs as necessary. In addition, Members will be given an opportunity to engage and contribute to the intergovernmental 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

Two UN official languages will be used as means of communication with ECA CSAG Members, English and Russian.

³ 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.

ANNEX 1

Scope of Work - Working Modalities and Principles

I. Strengthening the Functioning of ECA CSAG

Strengthened functioning of ECA CSAG to lead and facilitate coordinated dialogue and actions on crucial gender equality issues and topics of national, regional and global significance.

Principles:

1. ECA CSAG Members will develop and agree on its annual workplan with UN Women;
2. UN Women will set up regular dialogue sessions with ECA CSAG. The frequency of these meetings will be decided in consultation with ECA CSAG Members;
3. Clear 'Action Points' will be established for follow up from meetings;
4. UN Women will provide regular feedback on advice and requests received from ECA CSAG;
5. UN Women will identify specific areas of focus for ECA CSAG;
6. UN Women will clarify what deliverables are expected from the ECA CSAG;
7. UN Women will co-facilitate sharing of successful practices and lessons learned, and disseminate different ways in which Members can push the agenda further with UN Women;
8. There will be an annual ECA CSAG review with inputs from all CSAG Members;
9. ECA CSAG will play a stronger role in mobilizing and activism, with UN Women;
10. ECA CSAG Members will facilitate UN Women's outreach to and engagement with the broader civil society to enlist new advocates and amplify the gender equality goals in countries across the region;
11. UN Women will facilitate civil society outreach and engagement with other development partners, governments and intergovernmental bodies.

II. ECA CSAG Communication

Conversations with ECA CSAG Members will lead to enriched communication flows and solidarity on themes and topics related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Principles:

1. UN Women will meet with the ECA CSAG once per year and regularly through virtual meetings;
2. Based on regional priorities, UN Women will establish themed agendas and focus groups for closer considerations;
3. UN Women is open to consider using other means of communication as advised by CSAG Members.

III. Promote Inter-CSAG Alliances and Exchanges

An Inter-CSAG Alliance between Members of ECA CSAG and National CSAGs will contribute to coordinated actions, exchanges and improving the influence of CSAG Members at international, regional and country levels with common advocacy and information sharing on gender equality goals

Principles:

1. ECA CSAG Members should participate in other CSAG meetings to facilitate global solidarity network, information sharing and common advocacy;
2. UN Women will develop a calendar or timely notifications of meetings and conferences of interest to ECA CSAG Members and publish regular newsletters highlighting the achievements and work of UN Women and ECA CSAG;
3. ECA CSAG Members should link up with national CSAGs and coordination opportunities, including those that lack substantive civil society input;
4. UN Women should ensure the dissemination of messages of CSAG among other UN Women Offices, UN agencies, development partners and governments.

ANNEX 2

UN WOMEN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUP (ECA CSAG)

APPLICATION FORM

1. Family name: _____ First name: _____

2. Nationality: _____

3. Telephone: _____

4. E-mail: _____

5. Working language/s: English Russian

6. Permanent Address: _____

7. Sex: Male Female Other

8. **You are a member of (Please check the ones that are appropriate and name the institution. You can select more than one):**

Network/Coalition of women organizations dedicated to women’s rights/gender equality:

Civil Society Organization: _____

Grassroots organization: _____

Academia: _____

Media: _____

Think-tank: _____

Other: _____

9. **You advocate for (Please check the groups and areas that are appropriate. You can select more than one):**

Women’s leadership/political participation

People with disabilities

Women’s economic empowerment

LGBTI

Ending violence against women and girls

Youth

Gender responsive governance

People affected by HIV and AIDS

Women, Peace and Security

Men advocating for gender equality

Roma or other ethnic minority groups
(Please specify) _____

Other: _____

10. Are you 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?

11. Please indicate your area of expertise and its link to UN Women’s thematic area of work which are: women’s leadership and political participation, women’s economic empowerment, ending violence against women and girls, gender-responsive governance and budgeting, peace and security (For more information, please visit www.eca.unwomen.org/en).

12. Please explain your civil society background, indicating organizations you engaged with, your roles, area of intervention, and your key achievements. Please indicate how your civil society engagement has contributed to the advancement of the gender equality and women’s empowerment?

13. Please indicate why you would like to be a member of the UN Women ECA Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG). What makes you a suitable candidate for CSAG? What you would bring to ECA CSAG and what would be your expectation from this membership?

14. Briefly describe your experience with regards to engagement and contribution to intergovernmental processes - namely CSW sessions, Beijing Platform for Action reviews, SDGs related dialogue at the sub-regional, regional and/or global levels

15. Additional remarks, if any

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please send your application and CV to eca.procurement.bids@unwomen.org NO later than 14 May 2019 and indicate "ECA CSAG" in your email subject line.