



25 October 2019

Dear Friends and fellow gender equality advocates and activists,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2019. Thank you also for your invaluable work in support of gender equality.

UN Women is leveraging the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25) to galvanize the implementation of gender equality commitments. We are as impatient as you to see more significant, sustainable and irreversible change in the lives of the women and girls of the world.

To facilitate this much needed global public dialogue on accountability for gender equality and to complement the intergovernmental process, which, as you have noted in your letter may not always be sufficiently inclusive of civil society's voices, UN Women is organizing a civil society-centred, multi-stakeholder global gathering for gender equality and women's empowerment - the Generation Equality Forum. The Forum is convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the Governments of France and Mexico, with the leadership and partnership of civil society. The Forum will be a collective mobilization moment for urgent action to achieve gender equality. The Forum will celebrate and support the power of activism, feminist solidarity and youth leadership to achieve transformative change.

UN Women, France and Mexico have jointly selected members of the Forum's Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee (for a full list of civil society members on the steering committee, see Annex A). However, [members of the Forum's Civil Society Advisory Group](#) have been selected through a process entirely led and coordinated by civil society. The Civil Society Advisory group is further engaging in broad consultations with wider civil society.

The co-Chairs of the Selection Committee recently issued a statement explaining the steps that have been taken for the selection; please see [here](#). This process was coordinated by [NGO-CSW/NY](#), which is not convened by UN Women but is an independent civil society network. As this process has been independently led by civil society, we would advise you to reach out directly to NGO-CSW and the selection committee for any request for expansion of the group.

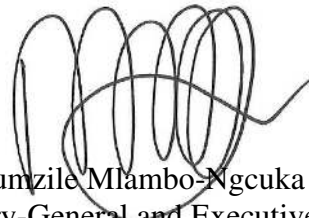
UN Women is fully committed to engaging the women's rights movement in all its diversity meaningfully and consistently throughout the Beijing+25 process and the Generation Equality Forum and its outcomes. UN Women has also established a Civil Society Strategic Planning and Leadership Group and a Beijing+25 Youth Task Force to provide direct advice to UN Women on Beijing+25 and the Generation Equality Forum (see Annexes B and [this link](#)). These groups represent a diversity of regions, themes, views and generations.

We are aware of the different positions and concerns on the issue of prostitution/sex work and are attentive to the important views of all concerned. UN Women has a neutral position on this issue. Thus, UN Women does not take a position for or against the decriminalization/legalization of prostitution/sex work. Member states have approached the legal framework relating to prostitution/sex work in different ways. We are aware that these different models are currently debated in many countries and in the global women's movement. UN Women believes that interventions should be guided by gender equality and women's empowerment objectives, that all women must be protected from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation, as well as discrimination and stigmatization, and have access to protection, healthcare and other services. UN Women will continue to work to support all women who are exploited, within the national framework of each country.

We are committed to ensuring that all voices can be equally heard on this and other issues where there are differing views. At the same time, our hope is that the Generation Equality Forum and wider Beijing+25 process can be spaces where the women's movement can come together around specific areas where we can work better together in support of achieving gender equality.

I look forward to working with all of you in solidarity and sisterhood.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director

## Annex A: List of civil society members on the Multi-stakeholder Steering Committee

1. Nidhi Goyal – Founder and Director of Rising Flame; She is on the board of the directors of The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) and is a disability rights feminist advocate
2. Latanya Mapp Frett – President and CEO of Global Fund for Women
3. Violet Shivutse – Chair of the Huairou Commission
4. Noelene Nabilivou – Associate of Development Alternatives with Women for a New era (DAWN); co-convener of Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition, and Pacific Partnerships on Gender, Climate change and Sustainable Development; Political Advisor for Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality
5. Hajer Sharief – Youth human rights advocate and the co-founder of “Together we build it”, promoting a peaceful democratic transition in Libya, inclusive of women and youth
6. Jessica Vega Ortega – President of Global Conclave of Indigenous Youth; promoter and defender of the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples
7. Massan d’Almeida – Founder, the first President and the outgoing Executive Director of the Network of Women’s Organizations in Francophone Africa (ROFAF)
8. Alice Ackermann – Youth representative of International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
9. Yamini Mishra – Director, Gender, Sexuality, Identity at Amnesty International, representing Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International
10. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés – High-level Ecuadorian Gender Equality Advocate
11. Yasmeen Hassan – Global Executive Director at Equality Now
12. Joanna Maycock (TBC) – Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby (EWL)

Annex B: Civil society members of the Strategic Planning and Leadership Group

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Affiliation</u></b>
Adwoa Aidoo	Girl Scouts Inc, Working Group on Girls
Anita Nayar	RegionsRefocus
Anne Marie Goetz	Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University
Antonia Kirkland	Equality Now
Anika Jane Dorothy	Beijing+25 Youth Taskforce Member
Aasha Shaik	Beijing+25 Youth Taskforce Member
Bridget Burns	Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)
Charlotte Bunch	Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University
Cindy Clark	Association for Women's Rights in Development
Cynthia Rothschild	Astrean Lesbian Foundation for Justice
Dean Peacock	Global Advocacy, Promundo-US
Gro Lindstad	FOKUS – Forum for Women and Development
Geeta Misra	CREA, feminist human rights organization (India)
Hannah Bond	Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK)
Houry Geudelekian	NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY (NGO CSW/NY)
Jessica Stern	Outright Action International

Joanna Maycock	European Women's Lobby
Joanne Sandler	Gender at Work
Kaavya Asoka	NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security
Kelly Thompson	Restless Development
Kimberley Vance	ARC International
Lara Fergus	Mama Cash
Lilian Mworeko	International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW)
Lina Abou Habib	Strategic MENA Advisor - Global Fund for Women
Lyric Thompson	International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
Mabel Bianco	Fundacion para Estudio Investigacion de la Mujer (FEIM), NGO CSW/LAC, CoNGOLAC
Mandeep Tiwana	Global Civil Society Alliance, CIVICUS
Maria Soledad Cisternas	Special Envoy of the UNSG on Disability and Accessibility
Marieke Koning	International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
Marusia Lopez Cruz	Power & Protection of Women Activists, JASS Crossregional
Mavic Cabrera Balleza	Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)
Melissa Upreti	Center for Women's Global Leadership - Rutgers University Center
Memory Kachambwa	The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
Musimbi Kanyoro	International human rights advocate

Nadia Elboubkri	FRIDA, the Young Feminist Fund
Noelene Nabilivou	Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality
Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda	African Union Ambassador
Priscilla Usiobsifo	BraveHeart Initiative for Youth & Women (BHI)
Roberta Clarke	Human rights defender
Rosamund Ebdon	Plan International, Global Hub
Rudelmar Bueno de Faria	ACT Alliance
Sam Vaghar	Millennium Campus Network (MCN)
Sandy Schilen	Huirou Commission
Shannon Kowalski	International Women's Health Coalition (USA)
Soon-Young Soon	Chair of the Board, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO); UN representative for the International Alliance of Women
Sophie Chassot	CARE (France)   Chargée de Plaidoyer/Advocacy Officer
Svitlana Moroz	Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS
Tarcila Rivera Zea	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Terry McGovern	Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University Medical Center
Vicky Smallman	Canadian Labour Congress
Violet Shivutse	Huirou Commission
Yamini Mishra	Gender, Sexuality and Identity, Amnesty International