**UN Women Liberia Call for Expression of Interest for membership on its Civil Society Advisory Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**Civil Society Advisory Group on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women**

 **UN Women, Liberia**

**Introduction:**

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of all forms of violence and 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, peace and security. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards.

Placing women’s rights at the centre of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. In Liberia, UN Women has a strong and vibrant relationship with civil society organizations across the country through its various programme interventions.

UN Women has been operational in Liberia since 2010 and has worked strategically in the country and currently manages one of the biggest offices in West Africa. It extended continuous support to the Government of Liberia, to key stakeholders from national and local levels, through various programmes and activities aimed at creating an enabling environment for gender equality, recognized as a prerequisite for sustainable development with a strong and active policy on gender equality.

For the next four years (2020-2024), the UN Women Country Programme will strategically focus on four priority areas, namely:

1. Governance and Women Political Participation and Leadership;
2. Women in Peace and Security and humanitarian actions;
3. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; and
4. Women's Economic Empowerment.

In order to fulfil its mandate, UN Women considers civil society as one of the most important constituencies providing an important source for ideas, policy perspectives, partnerships and support for the organization. Closely linked is the vital advocacy role played by civil society in advancing shared objectives in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. To provide strong and coherent leadership in support of the country’s priorities and efforts, UN Women builds effective

partnerships with a variety of actors. One of the key roles and functions of UN Women is to forge effective partnerships with civil society organizations and advocates who make important contributions to the national and global policy framework on women’s empowerment and gender equality and hold international and national leaders accountable for commitments to promote gender equality and women’s rights.

UN Women looks to 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 formal and informal networks, initiatives and social movements to articulate new social concerns. Together, UN Women and civil society advocate for the importance of advancing policy and dialogue on women’s rights and empowerment, development, peace and security.

UN Women Liberia is honoring the vital role that civil society organizations, in particular women’s organizations, play in promoting women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Towards this, UN Women established its first Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) at the country level in 2016 to create a space for continued dialogue, which has now completed its tenure. In order to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations to ensure their meaningful contribution to the work of the organization at the country level, a new CSAG will be invited to play key role in advising on UN Women programing aspects, its annual work plan and the preparation of its new Strategic Plan including CSOs role in intergovernmental processes and reporting with reference to CSW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), follow up to the implementation of Beijing + 25 review and Generation Equality Forum outcomes including as part of the set-up of Action Coalitions around specific thematic areas, and other processes

**Terms of Reference (ToR) for Members**

The ToR includes the objectives, role and activities of the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) members.

**Objectives of the CSAG:**

The CSAG will be a consultative forum for strategic dialogue between civil society and UN Women. More specifically the objectives will be to:

1. Foster dialogue and engagement between UN Women and civil society on national development issues and trends related to gender equality, women’s rights and empowerment in line with the international commitments/frameworks.
2. Inform UN Women Programs and key priorities through civil society’s expertise, experience, perspective and knowledge.
3. Serve as an interface/conduit between UN Women and key stakeholders including policy makers, marginalized communities and youth groups to strengthen its mandate in taking forward development agenda such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) outcomes and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Role and Responsibilities of the CSAG members**

The CSAG is an advisory body and an advocacy platform, with no technical mandate, to ensure that UN Women is connected to the real needs and issues that affects Liberia’s women and girls and to its civil society. The roles and responsibilities of the CSAG are as below:

1. Provide strategic perspectives to UN Women’s leadership, on its current advocacy agenda, thematic priorities and policy positions.
2. Assist UN Women to strengthen its engagement with civil society at all levels and enhance the dialogue between UN Women and civil society for partnership and learning.
3. Advise on gender equality issues, practices, and policies relevant to the national context and identify contextual and systemic issues in line with the normative frameworks of CEDAW, National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, Beijing + 25, SDGs, the Generation Equality Forum.
4. Contribute to the analysis on the socio‐economic and political environment in the country and how it impacts on gender equality and women’s rights issues.
5. Highlight gender equality issues (including emerging issues), analyses and lessons learnt that need to be addressed in future programme.
6. Highlight issues/concerns on the effectiveness of government, donors, UN, and international civil society organizations working in the area of gender equality.
7. Facilitate and spearhead strategic exercises for capacity development, with particular focus on building and strengthening the second and third tier generations of the women’s movement.
8. Be responsible and accountable for sharing information from CSAG meetings to the broader civil society and women’s movement across Liberia. Members will also ensure that concerns and priorities expressed by these groups are reflected within the CSAG meeting agenda.

**Important note:** The CSAG members will serve in their individual capacity and not as representatives of their organization.

**Membership**

The CSAG will have a maximum of twelve (12) members (of which at least 8 will be women, and at least 4 youth). The members will be reputed individuals with proven track record in their respective fields preferably with strong credentials as gender, development, women’s rights and or human rights advocates.

Representation will be sought from a diverse cross section of intersectional and intergenerational civil society including but not limited to members from women’s rights organizations, grassroots organizations, media, academia, private sector, ethnic minority groups, rural women, gender activists, persons living with/affected by HIV/AIDS, persons with disabilities, girls and adolescents, LGBTIQ, leaders of minority, vulnerable and marginalized groups as far as possible.

To ensure geographic diversity, potential members coming from counties of Liberia will be considered in this CSAG. The CSAG will also include subject matter or thematic experts of relevance to UN Women’s country program in Liberia. Membership will consist of both women and men and will include representatives from vulnerable and marginalized groups. Thematic experts/resource persons can be invited to meetings on a need basis.

The members on the CSAG will serve in their individual capacity and would ideally be drawn from or represent the following:

* Gender equality, women rights and women's empowerment networks/coalitions organizations, and movements;
* Grassroots rural/community-based organizations and women leaders;
* Communities, minority, vulnerable and marginalized groups to ensure that the CSAG is more inclusive, with grassroots outreach;
* Thematic areas: (1) Women’s Political Participation and Leadership; (2) Women’s Economic Empowerment; (3) Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW/G) and (4) Women in Peace and security processes/Humanitarian actions;
* Youth, media and academia;

Members of the CSAG may belong to organizations that are or may be eligible implementing partners of UN Women. However, to avoid conflict of interest, CSAG members will not have any direct oversight, monitoring or decision-making role in UN Women programming activities.

 The duration of membership will be for two years with a possibility of extension.

**Selection process**

The selection of the members of the CSAG involves several steps and will follow a transparent and an inclusive process. The finalization of the members of the CSAG will involve the following steps:

1. Applicants will be invited through an Expression of Interest published in the media and shared with a wide range of stakeholders including all UN Women partners and networks/alliances of CSOs.
2. After the receipt of the application form, a Selection Committee established by UN Women Liberia will review and finalize nominations in consensus.
3. In order to reflect and be representative of the demographic profile of Liberia, the Selection Committee will endeavour to include at least 33% young women and young men[[1]](#footnote-1) advocates in the final nominations.
4. A review grid will be used capturing the selection criteria and each application / CV will be marked / reviewed by each Selection Committee member.
5. Based on the recommendation of the Selection Committee, UN Women Management will make final decision in constituting the CSAG.

The following criteria will guide the selection of the members of the CSAG:

* Strong connection to national or regional women’s organizations and networks, concerned with matters within the competence of UN Women and with extensive experience in national and/or regional advocacy and policy development.
* Thematic expertise/experience in one or more UN Women priority areas.
* Demonstrable understanding of the needs and interests of diverse groups of women.
* Experience in policy, legislation and/or human rights treaties is valued, particularly at the regional/international level.
* Members must not be engaged in active politics.

The applications should include the following:

* Name, organization and contact details of the applicants.
* A short description (1-2 paragraphs) on why the applicants would be a suitable candidate for the CSAG.
* Detailed CV of the applicants.

**Frequency of meetings and location**

It is envisaged that at least two meetings (face to face or online/virtual), will be convened by the UN Women Liberia Country Office on a bi-annual basis and more frequently when deemed necessary. UN Women may also request for ad hoc meeting/s, if necessary, to discuss on specific issues and may call members via skype or another online platform. The UN Women Country Office in Liberia will host the CSAG Secretariat and facilitate the administration and organization of the formal meetings while the CSAG members would play a key role in setting the agenda, recording the discussions and follow-up actions.

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded in English, shared with all members and made public through various communication means. UN Women, as the secretariat for the CSAG, will provide space and logistics (meals/snacks) for the formal CSAG meetings.

The CSAG members are the primary owners of this forum and occasionally may wish to engage and meet on their own. The CSAG members can call their own meetings at county and/or district level as and when deemed necessary by them to discuss, share and disseminate information as per their own requirement and share updates with UN Women Liberia. They can stay in touch among themselves and with other members of CSAGs outside of Liberia, which UN Women can connect them to.

The regular meetings shall aim to produce concrete recommendations and feedback to be submitted to UN Women leadership for consideration. The members will have continuous access to UN Women, particularly senior management, to engage on any emerging issues that should, in their view, be addressed. Observers can be invited to meetings on an ad hoc basis (according to needs).

The UN Women Country Representative and Deputy Country Representative will have observer status on the CSAG.

**Expression of Interest**

Expression of Interest in participating in the UN Women’s CSAG should be submitted within three weeks of advertisement (i.e. through networking or advertisement publish in the newspaper) by UN Women Liberia. All Expression of Interest should be sent to liberia.procurement@unwomen.org.

**UN WOMEN CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUP**

**LIBERIA COUNTRY OFFICE**

**APPLICATION FORM**

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

Male

Female

Other

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

Women’s equality network

Women’s experienced organizations

Grassroots organizations

Academia

Private Sector

As an individual

Other

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

Ethnic minority groups (please specify):

Rural women

Gender activists

Persons living with/affected by HIV/AIDS

Persons with disabilities

Girls and adolescents

LGBTIQ

Others

1. 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 West and Central Africa region?
2. What is your area of expertise? (Please link it specifically to UN Women’s priority areas:

Governance and Women Political Participation and Leadership; Women in Peace and Security and humanitarian actions; Ending Violence Against Women and Girls; and Women's Economic Empowerment.)

1. Why do you believe you are a suitable candidate to be a part of the UN WOMEN Civil Society Advisory Group? *A short description (1-2 paragraphs)*
2. Additional remarks, if any

Signed: Date:

Please send your application and CV to liberia.procurement@unwomen.org and NO later than **22 October 2019** and indicate “**UNW Liberia CSAG**” in your email subject line.

1. According to the presentation “The Revised National Youth Policy (2012-2017)”, the definition of youth is from ages 15 to 35, though it is recognized that this is culturally and socially constructed.

<http://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/liberia/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)