Open Letter to Members of the UN’s General Assembly Regarding the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs

To: Member States of the UN General Assembly

Cc: President of ECOSOC, President of the General Assembly, President of the Human Rights Council, UN Secretary General.

Excellencies:

We are five months out from elections to the ECOSOC Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations for the 2023-2026 term. These are key elections for all those who value the expertise of civil society and seek to ensure the UN can benefit from it.

The Secretary General has called civil society the UN’s ‘indispensable partners’. Member States recently committed to boosting partnerships ‘to ensure an effective response to our common challenges’. In recommending approval of the participation of non-governmental organisations in a range of UN bodies and processes, the Committee on NGOs plays a key role in facilitating such partnerships. It is essential that the members of the Committee are committed to fulfilling such a task fairly and judiciously.

With this in mind, we would like to request the following, that:

1. States with an interest in facilitating and safeguarding civil society access to and participation in UN processes stand for election to the Committee.

2. Candidates make public the reasons for their candidacy and their commitment to fulfil their responsibilities as members of the Committee, as per ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.

3. All regions put up competitive slates, as the Asia-Pacific and GRULAC regions did in the last elections for the Committee in 2018. Competitive elections are important to create buy-in to the process and encourage states to be accountable for their commitments.

4. All regions make public candidacies at least two months before the elections to allow for proper consideration of candidates.

5. All ECOSOC members vote (and be encouraged to vote) only for candidates with positive track records in regard to civil society access and participation. Candidates could be assessed in regard to indicators such as support for relevant UN resolutions, such as those on civil society space and human rights defenders; on responses to cases of intimidation and reprisals; and on national level initiatives to safeguard civic space, press freedom – online as offline – and the right to defend human rights.
6. ECOSOC members should consider introducing term limits for membership of the Committee on NGOs, among other reforms encouraging openness and accountability. As with other UN bodies, states should be required to leave the Committee for a specific interval of time after serving for a maximum agreed period. Term limits would encourage greater diversity in membership over time and encourage states to step up as candidates.

The Committee on NGOs is entrusted with the task of facilitating civil society access so that the expertise and experience of civil society partners can enrich and inform UN debates. It needs members that are committed to fulfilling the Committee’s mandate in a fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, expeditious and apolitical manner. It falls on all member states – as potential candidates and / or electors – to ensure that the Committee membership is fit for purpose.

Please elect to stand up for civil society!

Yours sincerely,

Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (SA)
Aboriginal Corporation
Acceso a la Justicia
Access Now
Acción Solidaria
Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights
Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association (Addameer)
AfricaNPUD
AfroLatin@Project
Agência Piaget para o Desenvolvimento (APDES)
Agir Ensemble pour les Droits Humains
Ágora México
AIDS Action Europe
Alcohol and Drug Foundation Australia
Al-Erada Organization for Relief and Development
Al-Haq
Al Hub Wa Al Salam Iraqi Globally
Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights
Alliance for Diversity and Equality (AfED)

Alliance Nationale des Communautés pour la Santé Sénégal (ANCS)
Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
ALQST for Human Rights
Altaqwa Association for Women and Child Rights
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
Amman Center for Human Rights Studies (ACHRS)
Amnesty International
Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice
Anhur Foundation
Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU)
Arab Network for Knowledge about Human Rights (ANKH)
ARTICLE 19
ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
Asian Conference on Education & International Development (ACEID)
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
Asociación Civil Red Ciudadana
Association de Parents et Amis de Disparus au Maroc
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Association Margina from Bosnia and Herzegovina
Association Mauritanienne pour la Promotion des Droits de l’Homme (AMPDH)
Association of Anti-bribery Management System Practitioners Malaysia
Association pour le Respect du Droit des Populations Autochtones, du Développement Durable et du Droit de l’Homme (ARPA2DH)
ASUD
Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC)
Autistic Minority International
AWTAD Anti-Corruption Organization
Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRDBH)
Bahrain Transparency Association
Beneby Enterprises, LLC
Bensther Development Foundation
Berkeley Patients Group
Botswana Watch Organization
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
Caleidoscopio Humano
Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Innovative and Pragmatic Development Initiative (CIPDI)
Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN)
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center Women and Modern World
Centre for Human Rights Movement
Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation (CDPE)
Centro de Convivência É de Lei
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Centro de Justicia y Paz (Cepaz)
Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN)
Centro InterculturaCidade (ACI)
Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, A.C. (CEMDA)
Centro por la Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Costa Atlántica de Nicaragua (CEJUDHCAN)
Centros de Integración Juvenil (CIJ)
Child Rights Connect
CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
Chronic Illness Advocacy & Awareness Group (CIAAG)
CityWide Drugs Crisis Campaign Ireland
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)
Coalición Boliviana de Colectivos LGBTI
Coalitionivoirienne des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CIDDH)
Coexistence Organisation for Relief and Development
Collectif des Associations Contre l’Impunité au Togo (CACIT)
Collectif des Familles de Disparu(e)s en Algérie (CFDA)
Collectif Urgence Toxida
Comisión Colombiana de Juristas
Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
Concile Mondiale de Congrès
Diplomatiques des Aumoniers pour la Paix
Universelle des Droits Humains et
Juridiques
Conectados Pela Vida
Conectas Direitos Humanos
Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de Xpujil
Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI)
Corporación Viso Mutop Colombia
Correlation European Harm Reduction Network
Czech AIDS Help Society
DaMigra
Dar Africa
Darya Organization for Developing Women and Community
Dawei Probono Lawyer Network
DefendDefenders - East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project
Derechos Humanos y Litigio Estratégico Mexicano (DLM - Mexico)
Deutsche Aidshilfe
Dianova International
DRCNet Foundation Inc
Drug Policy Network South East Europe
Društvo AREAL
Elternkreis Wien Verein zur Förderung der Selbsthilfe für Angehörige von Suchtkranken
Empowerment for Sustainable Livelihood (EFSL)
Engineering Association for Development and Environment
Episkeia DDHH
Episteme. Investigación e Intervención Social
ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association for the Western Balkans and Turkey
Ethiopian Initiative for Human Rights (EIHR)
Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA)
European AIDS Treatment Group
European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies (ENCOD)
Eurothink - Center for European Strategies
Expert Forum (EFOR)
FAAAT Think & Do Tank
Fédération Addiction
Fédération Euro-Méditerranéenne Contre les Disparitions Forcées (FEMED)
Fédération Internationale pour les Droits Humains (FIDH)
FIACAT
Fields of Green for ALL
F’INE Pasifika Aotearoa Trust
Forum Droghe
Forum Réfugiés-Cosi
Fòs Feminista
Franciscans International
Fundação Portuguesa “A Comunidade Contra a SIDA” (FPCCSIDA)
Fundación de Ayuda contra la Drogadicción (FAD)
Fundación Gente Positiva CR
Fundación Multitudes
Fundación Red por la Infancia
International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific
Iranti South Africa
Iraqi Al-Amal Association
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
Japan Advocacy Network for Drug Policy
Jeunesse pour une Nouvelle Société (JNS)
Jordan Transparency Center
Just Fair
Justice for All
Justitia Center for Legal Protection of Human Rights in Algeria
Kampania Przeciw Homofobii (Campaign Against Homophobia)
Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
Khairat Al-Nahraeen of Human Organization
Kilómetro 0
KIOS Foundation
Kuchlak Welfare Society (KWS)
Balochistan Pakistan
Laboratorio de Paz
LakanBini Advocates Pilipinas
Larsa Organization
Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada (LRWC)
LEAP Europe
Legal Resources Centre (LRC)
Louisiana Veterans for Medical Cannabis
Maecnata Foundation
Mainline Foundation
Mangfoldhuset
MANODIVERSA
Mediterranean Dialogue Center
MENA Rights Group
Mesa de Trabajo Nacional (MTN)
México Unido Contra la Delincuencia (MUCD)
Mother and Child Development Organization (MCDO)
Mother Teresa Foundation
Movement for Democracy and Prosperity in Azerbaijan
Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies Canada
Mwatana for Human Rights
Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)
Narasha Community Development Group
Narconon Nigeria Initiative
National Birth Equity Collaborative (NBEC)
Neengar Society
New York NGO Committee on Drugs
No Borders Humanity Organization (NBH)
NORML France
Northern Citizen Community Board (NCCB)
Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad de Los Andes
Observatório de Economia e Gestão de Fraude (OBEGEF)
Observatorio Penal Mérida (OPEM DDHH)
OpenMedia
Option2world Initiative Against Drug Abuse
Organization for Addiction Prevention Treatment and Rehabilitation (OAPTAR)
OutRight Action International
Oyu Tolgoi Watch
Pan Africa ILGA (PAI)
Paropakar Primary Health Care Centre
PPUK
Partnership for Justice, Nigeria
Pathways for Women’s Empowerment and Development (PaWED)
Peace Track Initiative (PTI)
Pink Human Rights Defender NGO
Pioneer Filipino Transgender Men Movement
Plan International
Planet Ally
Plateforme Droits de l’Homme (PDH)
Pont de la Solidarité
Positiiviset ry HivFinland
Positive Voice
Positive Women
Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)
Promoting Empowerment Through Awareness for Lesbian and Bisexual Women (PETAL)
Protección Internacional Mesoamérica
Proyecto Centros de Atención Laboral, Escuela Nacional Sindical, Colombia
Purity Care Investment
Queer Singapore
Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (RoCK)
Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF)
Recovering Justice
Recovering Nepal (RN)
Red Internacional de Derechos Humanos (RIDH, Suiza/Ginebra)
Rede Nacional de Mulheres Negras no Combate à Violência
ReLeaf Malta
Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF)
Research Institute Without Walls
Réseau Nigérien des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (RNDDH)
Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains
REVS PLUS
Rights Realization Centre (RRC)
Rivers Without Boundaries Coalition - Mongolia
Romanian Association Against AIDS (ARAS)
Sadaa Center for Human Development
Safoi Konibodom
SALAM for Democracy and Human Rights (SALAM DHR)
San Patrignano Foundation
SEDRA-Federación de Planificación Familiar (SEDRA-FPFE)
Shine Africa Foundation - Teso (SAF-TESO)
Sisters of Charity Federation
Skilled Iraqi Woman Foundation
Social Research & Evaluation Pty Limited
Solace Initiative
Solidarité Internationale LGBTQI
SOS Africaines en Danger
South Asian Drugs and Addictions Research Council
Spero
Students for Sensible Drug Policy
Sudanese Women Rights Action
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)
Ta'afi Initiative Syria
The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation
The Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK)
The Global Alliance for LGBT Education (GALE)
The Global Interfaith Network (GIN-SSOGIE)
The Good Lobby
The Institute for Studies of Society, Economy & Environment (iSEE)
The International Youth Parliament (IYP)
The Jus Semper Global Alliance
The Lesbian and Gay Association of Liberia (LEGAL)
The National Organization of Yemeni Reporters SADA
The Stockholm Drug Users Union
The WPS Group
Together for Responsible Use and Cannabis Education (TRUCE)
Tournons La Page
Trans* Support Organization - Kenya
Transform Drug Policy Foundation
Transformation Self Motivation (TSM) Consultants
Transgender Europe (TGEU)
Transparency International
Transparency International Taiwan

Transvanilla Transgender Association
Uganda Key Populations Consortium (UKPC)
Ukrainian Network of People who Use Drugs (PUD.UA/ VOLNA)
Ukrainian Network of Women who Use Drugs (UNWUD)
UNANIMA International
UNCAC Coalition
Unchained At Last
Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (UDEFEGUA)
UNIDOS - Rede Nacional de Redução de Danos
Union contre la Co-infection VIH/Hépatites/Tuberculose (UNICO HIV/HV/TB)
Union for Equity and Health, Moldova
Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA)
Unitarian Universalist Association
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Nations Association, UK
United Nations Program, Occidental College
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
Urnas Abiertas
Uzbek Forum for Human Rights
Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)
VIVAT International
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
West Africa Drug Policy Network (WADPN)
West African Human Rights Defenders' Network
Western Pacific Palliative Care Advocacy Network; Australasian Palliative Link International
Women Supporting Women Association (WSW)
Women Nest
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)
Women's Human Rights International Association
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
World Organization Safety Montenegro
Yemeni Youth Forum for Peace
Young Feminist Europe
Young Queer Alliance
Youth for Human Rights Pakistan
Youth RISE
مؤسسة الحق لحقوق الإنسان - العراق
مؤسسة المرأة العراقية الماهرة
مؤسسة نخبة المستقبل لحقوق الإنسان
منظمة سما للدعم النفسي والاجتماعي - حقوق الإنسان
منظمة نور الرحمه لحقوق الإنسان