

To: Sima Bahous, Executive Director, UN Women  
Marc-Andre Dorel, Acting Chief, NGO Branch, UN DESA

CC: Ambassador Mathu Joyini, Chair of the Bureau, CSW66  
Lopa Banerjee, Chief, Civil Society Division, UN Women  
Executive Office of the Secretary-General

**RE: NGO Access to CSW66**

March 16, 2022

Dear Executive Director Bahous, Mr. Dorel, and colleagues at the UN Secretariat,

As representatives of civil society organizations working to advance women's human rights and gender equality worldwide, including organizations with consultative status under ECOSOC, we write to express our profound frustration and serious concern with the manner in which our in-person attendance at CSW66 has been handled by the UN Secretariat, after two years without access to United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In particular, we are disturbed by the timing of the email notification sent on the evening of Friday, 11 March, informing organizations with ECOSOC status that we would be able to enter the UN as of the 14th. Receiving that notice just three days prior to the start of the CSW prevents any organization not based in New York, or already present, from joining CSW66 in person. It is far too late for representatives to arrange finances and travel, which prevents the attendance especially of those based in the global South, many of whom need to fulfill visa requirements by the host country. The announcement comes after weeks of UN Women strongly advising NGOs not to travel for CSW, in response to the numerous inquiries and demands for access to the UN building and CSW66 from NGOs. Given that the UN has significantly relaxed its COVID mandates, even making masks optional, it is clear that COVID safety was not the reason for this delay in notification.

Lack of access to the UN building and CSW66 was a determining factor for many global South, women environmental human rights defenders, climate frontline State activists and non-NYC based civil society organizations who decided not to travel, recognizing they would not be able to directly engage Member States at the CSW66. The critical lack of their participation will be a significant missed opportunity for CSW66, and potentially affect the quality, value, and impact of the Agreed Conclusions, which will likely now fail to reflect the realities and solutions of grassroots organizations of women and girls in all their diversity. In the context of the urgent current climate and environmental crisis and loss and damage, and the need for additional technical expertise and knowledge of the intricate and nuanced linkages between gender

equality and climate change, the absence of civil society experts and activists will lead to a glaring gap in the outcomes of this CSW66.

Additionally, civil society organizations have still not been formally notified regarding our ability to register for Special Event Tickets. The information we have gleaned has been from unconfirmed announcements and our own efforts to inquire at the information desk at UNHQ on March 14. This means our participation - even of those present in New York - is ad hoc and unorganized at best. As the daily proceedings continue, and especially as negotiations resume on Thursday, 17 March, we request and expect official notification and a clear system for special event tickets per accredited organization to enable us to be present in the UN building and interact with Member States involved in negotiations, as permitted by our ECOSOC accreditation.

We would like to strongly emphasize that this last-minute notice, preventing the meaningful participation particularly of global South NGOs, must not establish any precedent for civil society engagement in the future CSW sessions nor in any of the UN processes. As outlined in the UN Charter and the resolutions that guarantee NGO access to UN deliberations, the participation of non-governmental organizations, particularly from developing countries as instructed by ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, is fundamental to ensuring that the UN continues to serve as a force for good for humankind and for the planet. We look forward to more equitable arrangements for our participation moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

Access Now\*

ACT Alliance\*

Act Church of Sweden

African Women's Communications and Development Network (FEMNET)\*

Aksi! for gender, social and ecological justice

ALGA Rural Women's Association\*

AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women

Amnesty International\*

Association Femmes Leadership et Développement Durable\*

Asian Migrants Coordinating Body (AMCB)

Asia Pacific Women's Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)\*

Asia Pacific Women's Watch (APWW)\*

Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)\*

Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers (ATKI-HK)

Association Femmes Leadership et Développement Durable\*

Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC\*

Beijing-SDG5 Facilitating Group

Cameroon women's peace movement

Canadian Labour Congress\*  
CARAM Asia\*  
Center for Reproductive Rights\*  
Center for Women's Resources  
CHIRAPAQ,Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú\*  
CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality  
Climate Watch Thailand  
Coordinadora de la Mujer  
CREA  
CURE COVID  
Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)\*  
DIVA for Equality  
Equality Fund\*  
Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia\*  
Family Planning New Zealand\*  
Family Planning NSW\*  
FOKUS Forum for women and development\*  
Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer  
Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM)  
Fòs Feminista\*  
FSBPI (Indonesia Unite Union Federation)  
Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer\*  
GATJ Tax and Gender Working Group  
GenDev Centre for Research and Innovation  
Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)\*  
International Domestic Workers Federation  
Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre  
Korea Center for United Nations Human Rights Policy  
HomeNet Pakistan  
Hope Advocates Africa  
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)\*  
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)  
International Service for Human Rights\*  
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)\*  
International Women's Development Agency\*  
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific\*  
Major Group for Children and Youth\*  
MenEngage Global Alliance\*  
MSI Reproductive Choices\*  
National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF)\*  
Nepal disabled women association NDWA  
Nijera Kori  
NGO CSW LAC

OutRight Action International\*  
Pathways for Women's Empowerment and Development (PaWED)  
Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam  
Plan International\*  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America\*  
Public Services International (PSI)\*  
RED DE EDUCACION POPULAR ENTRE MUJERES DE AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE\*  
Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe por el Derecho a Decidir  
Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice (RESURJ)  
REFACOF\*  
RFSL\*  
RFSU\*  
SEDRA-FPFE  
SERAC-Bangladesh\*  
SERUNI\*  
Shelter participatory org  
Shifting the Power Coalition  
Sisterhood Network  
Sukaar Welfare Organization  
Shobujer Ovijan Foundation\*  
Soroptimist International\*  
SERUNI (Serikat Perempuan Indonesia)  
Sukaar Welfare Organization  
Tamil Nadu Women's Forum\*  
UNI Global Union (UNI)  
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF)  
WECF International\*  
WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform\*  
Women Deliver\*  
Women Enabled International\*  
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN)\*  
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)\*  
Women for Women Human Rights (WWHR) - New Ways\*  
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights\*  
Women's Health in Women's Hands CHC\*  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)\*  
Women's Initiative on Climate Change  
Women's Major Group  
Womankind Worldwide

**(Organizations with an asterisk\* have ECOSOC status.)**