

WFUNA STATEMENT TO THE CONSULTATIONS OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON NGOS

22 JUNE 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

The World Federation of United Nations Associations is pleased to take part in these highly anticipated consultations.

WFUNA has enjoyed General Consultative status since 1947 and has since then relentlessly contributed to the work of the ECOSOC and the UN more broadly through its activities, and those of the 105 national UN associations in as many UN Member-States. In this time, our Organization has been engaged in a variety of programs and campaigns that encompass a large part of the spectrum covered by UN action.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents a great opportunity for increased collaboration between Civil Society and the United Nations. Our contribution today will focus on 1. NGOs further contributing to the work of the ECOSOC and 2. on the issues regarding NGO involvement with the UN after obtaining consultative status, i.e. guiding questions 1 and 4.

1. Fully sharing the view that Civil Society's pivotal role will continue to increase in the 21st century, WFUNA is alarmed by the fact that Civil Society space is shrinking globally and how this tendency is affecting the UN. WFUNA believes that awarding Consultative Status to more CSOs is a mandatory step for the UN to award civil society the deserved space and benefit in return the expertise civil society can provide. The NGO Committee is called to adopt a more open stance by accepting more organizations rather than leaving them out.

Furthermore, WFUNA believes that not only will this strengthen the collaboration between Headquarters and NGOs but between UN country teams, their field offices and NGOs. A large number of our UN Associations that have consultative status call for such collaboration, as local UN offices are a natural point of contact for them. Ignoring the opportunity to interact with local NGOs with consultative status risks losing a growing and indispensable expertise.

2. WFUNA's presence and activities at multiple UN duty stations has brought to our attention a difference in the way NGOs with consultative status are interacted with at the respective UN offices. In particular, it is much easier to have access to UN spaces as well as meetings and room bookings in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna than it is at Headquarters where regulations appear unnecessarily stringent at times. We fully support that the application of good practices regarding CSO access in New York would mirror those of the other duty stations.

Another issue of concern is the outdated NGO database, which, if updated, could serve as a tool for stronger collaboration between NGOs and the UN. WFUNA supports a general update of the NGO database after which, for example, NGOs should no longer be categorized by MDG while the database itself would become a valuable tool for the entire UN system.

Mr. Chair, of course I cannot close without expressing the hope that more meetings like the current one will follow, leading to a continuing dialogue between the Committee on NGOs and civil society.

Thank you for your attention.



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