

Dear [COMPLETE]

We are one month away from elections to the UN's ECOSOC Committee on NGOs. The Committee on NGOs plays a key role in enabling the partnership between States and civil society, by recommending approval of the participation of non-governmental organisations in a range of UN bodies and processes. It is essential that Committee members are committed to fulfilling such a task fairly and judiciously.

We are writing to see if (XX country) has considered standing as a candidate for the Committee on NGOs? We would hope that (XX country) would play an important role as a member, in ensuring that applicants for accreditation were considered in a fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, expeditious and apolitical manner.

The Committee on NGOs has been criticized by UN officials, experts, States and civil society representatives for deferring some applications through perpetual questioning and for making baseless accusations against some applicants. This practice robs the UN of critical civil society experience and expertise to deal with the huge challenges we face globally.

Beyond considering standing for election, we would ask that you encourage:

i/ Candidates to 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.

2/ All regions to 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.

3/ All ECOSOC members 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.

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. We need the Committee to have members committed to fulfilling the Committee's mandate.

[ADD IF YOU HAVE THE CAPACITY TO FOLLOW UP: I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further. Would you have time for a brief conversation in the near future?]

With best wishes,

[COMPLETE]