



Chairperson
Commission on the Status of Women



28 January 2022

Excellency,

The upcoming sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), taking place from 14-25 March 2022 in a hybrid format due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, will discuss as its priority theme ‘Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes’. As the preeminent global policy making body on gender equality, the Commission has a history of strong participation by civil society and social justice actors.

The Economic and Social Council encourages all States to consider including representatives of non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors in their delegations to the Commission (resolution 2015/6, paragraph 21). Further, in the same resolution, the Council decided to strengthen existing opportunities for non-governmental organizations to contribute to the work of the Commission.

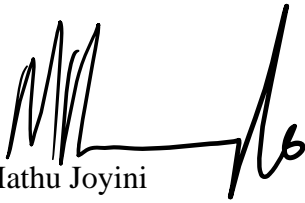
We therefore call on your Government to consider including in your delegation gender equality advocates from civil society and women’s rights and youth groups, prioritizing those that work on critical human rights and gender equality issues including at grassroots levels. We urge Member States to carry forward the spirit of CSW as the largest convening of gender equality advocates across governments and civil society, and, by including civil society and youth in national delegations, to compensate for the limited participation options that civil society has been facing in a virtual/hybrid modality the second year running. For the priority theme of the session, civil society and in particular young people have been at the forefront of driving change and prompting the world to take note, and it therefore is crucial that they have a role to play in the discussions at the CSW and in contributing to the outcomes.

We hope that ministerial-level leadership of your delegation and the inclusion of strong gender equality advocates from diverse civil society groups and youth will reflect your Government’s strong commitment to accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the 2030 Agenda’s aspiration to “leave no one behind”. We encourage all Governments to share information on inclusion of civil society representatives in their delegation with UN Women offices in their region or country.

We take this opportunity to highlight that, given the importance of youth engagement, UN Women will be convening a virtual ‘*Youth Dialogue*’ leading up to the session. The expectations and recommendations from this forum should enrich the Commission’s own deliberations. We would also like to encourage delegations to participate in the “*Virtual Vienna Cafes*” hosted by the NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGO CSW), a diverse group of civil society organizations. These online stakeholder meetings will aim to provide an informal space to hear from civil society expertise, to strategize and to build consensus.

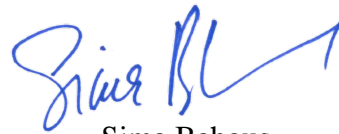
As Governments are thinking of organizing their own side events, we urge to include and involve multi-stakeholder actors as much as possible, in support also of the Secretary-General’s drive towards a more engaged, enhanced multilateralism, and in solidarity with young people and civil society going forward.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Mathu Joyini
Chair

Commission on the Status of Women



Sima Bahous

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director
UN Women