

Houry Geudelekian
Chair of NGO CSW/NY
Statement for ECOSOC Chairs of Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies:

Madam President, Excellencies and respected colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to represent over 15,000 activists fighting for gender equality. Thank you for this opportunity to address this meeting with the Chairs of the Functional Commissions.

First, I would like to congratulate you and thank you for prioritizing rights of women as President of ECOSOC. To quote you from your election statement: “Women’s participation is a prerequisite and a key factor for economic growth”.

Women’s participation also assures success in almost all priorities that this body is addressing. If this is the Decade of Action, our best bet is involving women and girls who are prewired for action. We create, nourish and care for lives. We know how to multitask and understand viscerally what needs to be done.

As the Chair of NGO CSW/NY and the global civil society convener of Generation Equality Forums, I can assure you women and girls of all diversity are ready to take action. Just to give you some concrete numbers. Since July when we first began reaching out, we have organized over 3000 women just on our online discussions. We consistently have hundreds of participants every two weeks who join our virtual calls to learn and share their concerns from every corner of the world. They are ready to take action!

As a matter of fact while UN seems to be cutting back on hours and access we have more than doubled our participation in the last few years. This year UN Women is reporting over 12,000 registered for CSW64, a record. While we at NGO CSW/NY scheduled over 550 parallel events, plus caucuses, conversation circles and trainings. The conversations in these spaces are on the six Thematic Groups that are based on the SDGs. We are not recreating the wheel. We are happy to work with UN bodies and already existing documents to help implement agreed documents.

We are also looking forward to working with the Commission on the Status of Women Bureau and come up with acceptable solutions that will be beneficial to all. It will be most helpful to have selected Civil Society members be part of the negotiations to help bring these implementations to life. We can help self select just a few who can attend on our behalf while we collect and inform the rest in a safe and collaborative way. We implore you to consider and look into how and why we were left out of these spaces in the first place. Our activists work year round collecting information, saving their money to attend CSW to bring their expertise, please help us magnify their voices so we can all achieve our goals.

Thank you.