

Ambassador Dame Barbara Woodward

Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations
885 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
USA

Dear Excellency,

We are writing on behalf of the Together First coalition to ask for your support in ensuring the results of the UN75 Global Conversation are acted on. As one of the funders of the Global Conversation and a supporter of its follow up process, we hope that you share our interest in seeing the consultations with 1.5 million people in 2020, and with civil society organizations and youth groups in 2021, delivering concrete results.

Together First is a diverse coalition of over 200 civil society organisations from all regions of the world. We support the UN's work in different ways, from helping to implement the Sustainable Development Goals to helping the Organization reach the people it serves. We have been mobilizing our networks during the last two years - including young, marginalised and offline communities - to contribute to the UN75 Global Conversation and later on to the "We the Peoples" track of the Our Common Agenda consultation.

Our inputs were as diverse as our coalition. At the same time, all of us had one single ask in common: **we called for the UN to become more inclusive, starting with the appointment of a civil society champion.**

At present, civil society has no visible home within the UN. It is spread thinly across different parts of the system, often those with few resources. To us on the outside, it appears that the diversity of civil society is not reflected at the UN's highest levels. We work across the spectrum of UN issues but are often lumped together, with engagement confined to a privileged few based in New York or Geneva. Our capacities as partners are not being leveraged. Our participation feels like a box-ticking exercise.

A civil society champion could change this, especially if they are given the rank, mandate and resources to deepen and diversify engagement. They could serve as a catalyst - coordinating, streamlining and taking on functions currently distributed across the system. They could also support further listening initiatives. We believe consultation should be the norm for the UN, not just for anniversaries.

Representation matters - and this appointment would be of great symbolic, as well as practical value. Many of our members were surprised that such a position does not already exist. Others have been advocating for its creation for [several years](#).

We were therefore delighted when Member States agreed to “boost partnerships” and “make the United Nations more inclusive” and committed to listen and respond to the Global Conversation in the UN75 Declaration. Since then, 52 Member States have acted on this commitment, [signalling their support](#) for a UN civil society champion.

As one of these Member States, as well as a funder and active supporter of UN75, we hope the United Kingdom will advocate for this position as a tangible outcome from the Global Conversation. For many in our community, UN75 was the first experience of direct engagement with the UN. For others, this was yet another consultation. While we appreciated being listened to, we also want to be heard - and the call for a civil society champion has the support of people from all walks of life, far beyond our own networks.

We sincerely hope that the Global Conversation was not a box-ticking exercise. Heeding this call would demonstrate that.

Representatives of our regionally diverse coalition would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss the proposal further. Attached to this letter is Together First’s detailed research report on the civil society champion proposal, refined through a series of roundtable meetings with global experts, UN officials and civil society representatives from all regions.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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Executive Director of Plataforma CIPÓ

Natalie Samarasinghe
CEO of UNA-UK

On behalf of the Together First coalition