**Mandate of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice**

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30 May 2017

In the spirit of Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, we are honoured, as the current mandate-holders of the Working Group, to share with the Consultative Group what we consider as essential requirements for the Working Group’s membership. We base our views on our experience of working as a group since the inception of the mandate in 2011 and we go beyond the general requirements of human rights expertise and experience for serving as independent human rights experts.

A fundamental first requirement would be a track record of commitment towomen’s right to equality and practical experience specifically on the issue of women’s human rights, particularly regarding the question of discrimination against women as existing in every part of the world.

Different from individual mandate holders, the effective functioning of the Working Group requires a combination of skills and backgrounds among its five members and a common language to enable it to work as a team, including when there is no official interpretation. Given its mandate on discrimination in law and in practice, the five members should include experts with legal backgrounds. The combination of skills should include strong writing capacity.

The inclusion in the membership of the Working Group of highly qualified men with proven record of working on women’s right to equality would be a welcome development. However, effort to bring diversity to the composition of the Group should not in any way compromise the fundamental requirement of commitment and expertise on the issue of discrimination against women.

Our experience in the past six years has shown that strong connections of the experts with networks of academia, civil society organizations, and other independent institutions are most valuable, in terms of the mandate’s outreach as well as its ability to obtain research assistance, which the limited resources available to the mandate does not provide. Our experience also indicates that a progressive and innovative mind-set and strong dedication for the cause of equality would be an added value in confronting the challenge of this broad mandate of combatting the persistent and pervasive discrimination against women.