



April 10, 2022

UN Women
220 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Re: Threats, intimidation, and reprisals against C-Fam during CSW66

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to inform you of an incident of harassment and intimidation against C-Fam during the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. If it remains unaddressed, the incident may constitute an act of reprisal against our organization.

1. C-Fam is an organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and has participated in every Commission on the Status of Women since its founding 25 years ago, including by hosting dozens of side-events at UNHQ alongside Member States as well as parallel events through NGO/CSW.
2. This year, NGO/CSW denied our parallel event application. NGO/CSW informed us that our application was denied because it did not "align with NGO/CSW's values".
3. During our preparation for CSW we were made aware of a [report](#) titled "Rights at Risk" from the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), an organization accredited with ECOSOC. The report labeled C-Fam as an "anti-rights" group, alongside other ECOSOC accredited organizations, and made several unfounded and misleading allegations. AWID never once contacted C-Fam to verify the information in their report.
4. We were troubled enough to be labeled "anti-rights" by an organization with ECOSOC status, but we were shocked when Annissa Daboussi, a representative of AWID, called for hunting down and expelling, by revoking ECOSOC status, of all "anti-rights infiltrators" in a comment during the Open CSO Hearing on the CSW Methods of Work hosted by the delegations of Denmark and Costa Rica on February 24.
5. The comment, delivered in the chat box of the open hearing, was in direct response to a question of our executive vice president, Lisa Correnti, asking for information on how to understand and appeal the rejection of our application for a



CSW66 parallel event. Ms. Correnti hoped to receive further clarification since her requests to NGO/CSW were unanswered. We feel it was appropriate in this forum since the hearing, was precisely addressing participation by civil society. A screenshot of the AWID comment is annexed below.

AWID crossed a line when they threatened and tried to intimidate C-Fam.

6. We expect many disagreements on a range of subjects at the United Nations, and we expect and welcome when members of civil society express themselves with candor and make known their strong emotions through all available means. But candor and passion, even for a just cause, do not justify threats and intimidation. Given the context, we believe AWID's comments at the open hearing were a threat to C-Fam and manifest a desire to intimidate.
7. We are also concerned that AWID's comments reflect a conspiracy to shut out participation by groups who promote the protection of children in the womb and family-oriented policies in international fora by NGO/CSW. We must sadly note that UNFPA denied C-Fam's application to participate and be present at the Nairobi Summit in 2019 alongside other like-minded organizations, without giving reason.
8. We regret, in this regard, that UN Women personnel, the Danish and Costa Rican delegations, and the NGO/CSW staff who were attending the open hearing did not respond to AWID's threats and intimidation against C-Fam. We hope this was the result of oversight, or a failure to realize what exactly was happening.

Silence on the part of UN Women, Denmark, Costa Rica, and NGO/CSW gives AWID's threats and intimidation the appearance of being an act of reprisal against C-Fam because of our pro-life and pro-family views.

9. To remedy the perception that UN Women and the delegations of Denmark and Costa Rica sanctioned AWID's threats and intimidation against C-Fam, we invite UN Women, the Danish and Costa Rican delegations, and NGO/CSW to make AWID aware that such threats and intimidation have no place in civilized debates at the United Nations, and that as an ECOSOC accredited organization they should apologize to C-Fam and any other organizations that may have felt intimidated during the open hearing and commit themselves to acting with tolerance and respect in the future.



10. UN Women and the delegations in question should consider all available options if AWID fails to correct its behavior, including recommending the suspension or withdrawal of ECOSOC status for “engaging in a pattern of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations” within the meaning of paragraph 57(a) of ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 governing the consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

We thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. Contact our Executive VP Lisa Correnti (lisa@c-fam.org) for any further communications and developments.

Respectfully,

Stefano Gennarini

Stefano Gennarini
Vice President for Legal Studies

cc:

H.E. Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General
H.E. Ms. Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women
H.E. Mr. Rodrigo A. Carazo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations
H.E. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, c/o Marc-Andre Dorel Acting Chief,
NGO Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UN DESA



ANNEX I: Screen shot of AWID's threats and intimidation

Below is the screenshot capturing the exchange between C-Fam Executive Vice-President Lisa Correnti and an AWID representative during the virtual Open CSO Hearing on the CSW Methods of Work hosted by the delegations of Denmark and Costa Rica on February 24, 2022. The messages from Ms. Correnti are labeled "Me."

From Me to Everyone: 9:33 AM
Thank you, Devan. Would you kindly direct the organizations that were rejected to a person we can followup with.

From mary scott to Everyone: 9:33 AM
Would love a transcript of Ivy's remarks - cheering her on!

From Anissa Daboussi AWID to Everyone: 9:34 AM
AWID RECOMMANDATIONS - METHODS OF WORK:
- Stop anti-rights actors infiltration of CSW spaces: work with civil society to denounce and stop their presence, remove their ecosoc status
- Ensure mechanisms for meaningful virtual participation of civil society during all proceedings including removing restrictions to enter spaces where formal negotiations are happening, to restore capacity to advocate for gender justice. Until 2000s, CSOs/feminist organizations were able to enter the rooms where official discussions were taking place, and advocate with the delegates. After 2010s it became impossible after Anti-rights actors lobbied for restriction. Instead Antirights have access to this space and at times even sit on state delegations. This can be reversed, it is a question of political will
- read more on AWID's analysis on anti-rights infiltration of the UN: <https://www.awid.org/resources/new-primer-rights-risk>

From Isabel Vidal to Everyone: <https://www.awid.org/resource>
If you click on the Live Transcript her comments are reflected.

From Susan O'Malley to Everyone: 9:35 AM
Fantastic, important, well

↓ 1 New Message

To: Everyone