



# Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations: A Guide

Second Updated Edition



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**UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)  
with Gretchen Sidhu**



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## Table of Contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <b>Preface</b>  | v    |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | vii  |
| <b>About this Book</b>  | xiii |
| <br>  |      |
| <b>Section One</b>  |      |
| <b>Decision-Making at the United Nations: How It Works</b>                  | 1    |
| <b>Chapter 1: The UN: Who Makes Decisions?</b>                              | 3    |
| <b>Chapter 2: Negotiations: How Are Decisions Made?</b>                     | 19   |
| <b>Chapter 3: The Negotiators: Building “Blocs” of Power</b>                | 29   |
| <b>Chapter 4: Tracking Negotiations and<br/>Decisions Through Documents</b> | 35   |
| <b>Chapter 5: Outcomes: The Nature of UN Decisions</b>                      | 43   |
| <br>  |      |
| <b>Section Two</b>  |      |
| <b>A Guide to NGO Participation</b>   | 51   |
| <b>Chapter 1: Accreditation</b>   | 55   |
| <b>Chapter 2: Preparing for a Meeting</b>                                   | 65   |
| <b>Chapter 3: Follow-up and Implementation</b>                              | 71   |
| <br>  |      |
| <b>Annexes</b>  | 85   |
| <b>Annex I: NGO Focal Points of the United Nations</b>                      | 87   |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Annex II:</b> Institutional Resources  | 119 |
| <b>Annex III:</b> Excerpt from ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31<br>on Consultative relationship between the<br>United Nations and non-governmental organizations | 123 |
| <b>Annex IV:</b> Description of the DPI Accreditation Process and Criteria  | 133 |
| <b>Annex V:</b> Three Generations of UN-Civil Society Relations:<br>A Quick Sketch, by Tony Hill  | 135 |
| <b>Acronyms</b>   | 145 |
| <b>Suggested Reading and Additional Resources</b>   | 151 |

## Preface

In its work on the UN system-NGO interface, NGLS has witnessed at first-hand the bewilderment of many NGO and civil society representatives at the seeming complexity of the intergovernmental negotiating and decision-making process in which the United Nation's Member States engage. Time after time, countless non-governmental representatives have asked NGLS: What is a "non-paper?" What does "*ad-referendum*" mean? Who are the "Friends of the Chair?," and other questions. Many UN staff have also posed the same questions.

Originally published by NGLS in 2004, this second revised edition of the *Decision-Making Guide* presents updated information on how key participants engage in intergovernmental negotiations; new trends in civil society engagement over the past few years, whether it be through interactive hearings or online consultations; and a list of NGO focal points across the UN system.

This publication responds to an ongoing and widely-articulated need for a volume that, in a concise way, explains the governance and decision-making fora and processes of the United Nations system. Chapter one of Section One explains the principal UN organs of intergovernmental decision making in the ongoing work of the system. Another chapter explains the negotiating blocs of Member States at the UN while another describes the various types of documentation that constitute the lifeblood of the decision-making system. The final chapter of this section of the book looks at the nature of UN decisions and the weight they carry internationally. It must be borne in mind, however, that despite strict legal definitions, the nature and weight of UN decisions are often subject to interpretation by UN Member States in its deliberative processes.

Today, the international community has, by and large, accepted that the promotion of good governance at the national and international level benefits from the participation of independent groups and organizations of civil society in deliberative governance processes and systems. Section Two of this volume, written by Gretchen Sidhu, provides practical knowledge, advice and guidance to non-governmental representatives who wish to constructively and effectively engage with the UN system, ranging from accreditation to the preparatory process, to networking, and engaging in follow-up activities after a meeting.

Given the breadth and complexity of the subject matter of this publication, NGLS considers it a work in progress to be developed and amplified in future editions. NGLS welcomes, therefore, comments, observations and suggestions from readers.

Tony Hill  
Coordinator  
UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)  
September 2007

## **Introduction**

The United Nations, from its inception, has served as the primary international arena for governments to come together, discuss common global concerns, and make decisions on collective actions to take in response. Nearly every government in the world is now a UN Member State, and can offer its voice on subjects from poverty to peace and security, from disputed borders to women's rights to the protection of fish in the sea. Despite the often complex interplay of differing political perspectives, Member States work together to reach consensus decisions in the belief that strong collective support can help transform written agreements into effective action.

While only governments actually make decisions at the UN, in the form of resolutions, treaties, plans of action and so on, the decision-making process itself has increasingly opened to an array of non-state players, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, trade unions, foundations, think tanks, local authorities and academic researchers. This was particularly striking during the series of world conferences and summits in the 1990s where civil society and other groups came to be seen both as sources of expertise that can inform decisions, and as partners that can help carry them out.

NGOs have successfully advocated for major shifts in policy related to human rights, sustainable development and disabilities, raised important proposals such as a global currency transaction tax, and worked nationally and locally to change laws and offer services in areas such as health and education. They now address plenary meetings of UN Member States contribute alternative reports and strategic information to treaty bodies, brief the Security Council on occasion “Arria Formula”—on topics such as women, peace and security—and sometimes sit on government delegations at UN meetings.

The 1945 UN Charter itself calls upon the UN to work with non-governmental organizations. In the intervening years, as the door to multilateral government debate opened on many of these subjects, the number and strength of NGOs flourished as well, with organizations forming and forging links across countries and regions. According to the Union of International Associations, the number of international NGOs alone has grown to over 50,000 in 2003. Countless thousands more work regionally, nationally and locally.

NGO involvement in the UN expanded considerably through the series of UN world conferences and summits held during the 1990s. These large-scale events on key issues such as the environment, population and women, sometimes drew as many as 40,000 participants. With some exposure to the mechanisms and possibilities of intergovernmental decision making, many NGOs took a new interest in the UN as an arena for policy dialogue and advocacy. Others came forward through intensive organizing around emerging issues such as the creation of the International Criminal Court, the critical problems of landmines, child soldiers and the devastating worldwide pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

More recently, civil society movements have mobilized hundreds of thousands of people around a number of issues. The Make Poverty History campaign, launched in January 2005, has seen an unprecedented level of global campaigning and mobilizing of public support to bring about a fundamental rethink of the rules of the relationship between the developing and the developed world. Working for the development of an international Arms Trade Treaty that would ease the suffering caused by irresponsible weapons transfer, Control Arms, a consortium of NGOs working on arms issues, gathered the support of over one million people worldwide in its Million Faces Campaign Petition, which was presented to the UN

Secretary-General in October 2006 during the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Another recent trend has been online mobilization where global online networks connect and help educate people working on similar issues through e-learning, advocacy and training. This process has been particularly evident during preparations and the two summit phases of the World Summit on the Information Society as well as its follow up. Such networks have provided a forum for policy discussions and governance of the Internet, communication rights and empowerment.

Member States of the UN have responded to this upsurge of non-governmental actors both with encouragement and some measure of caution. Several years ago, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) revised its guidelines for NGO consultative status—the main avenue for making regular contributions to ECOSOC decision-making processes—to foster more diverse participation, especially from developing countries (Resolution 1996/31 *Consultative relationship between the United Nations and Non-Governmental Organizations*).

Another step has been the introduction of innovative meeting formats that enlarge the scope of participation, such as hearings, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and roundtables where NGOs and governments sit side by side and present their views to each other. The use of “online consultations” has risen as well where UN entities ask for input from civil society on working methods, reports, resolutions and even treaties. Subjects of online consultations have been equally diverse—ranging from migration and development to the environment to the recently adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Since June 2005, the General Assembly has held four informal interactive hearings with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. The first one was held during the lead-up to the 2005 World Summit, and three additional ones were held in 2006 as inputs to the High-level Meetings to review the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS; on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010; and on international migration and development. These hearings have been an important innovation for interaction between civil society and the Assembly as they have created an opportunity for civil society representatives, from both the developing and the developed world, to dialogue with representatives of Member States.

At the close of the UN General Assembly's Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2006, the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, Jan Eliasson (Sweden), remarked, "What I did not know that we would see was the unprecedented level of constructive and substantive interaction between Member States and civil society...we come from different backgrounds and have different tactics, but we need each other...The impact of this interaction has been evident in the negotiations on the Political Declaration which we have just adopted...I know that none of you got all that you wanted in this Declaration. That is the nature of negotiations. But I know that, thanks in part to the influence brought to bear by civil society, the draft got stronger—not weaker—in the final days and hours."

Despite this greater openness, the UN remains an institution governed by its Member States and is structured primarily to support opportunities for governments to debate and make decisions. Not all

governments have readily or in some cases consistently embraced a wider role for civil society. Strict rules protect government prerogatives and procedures, while the guidelines for NGO access remain fairly general, which allow for differing interpretations across different forums. Depending on how they have been accredited, NGOs can also be held accountable to abide by certain stipulations, such as filing reports confirming the relevance of their work to the UN.

In the 2000 Millennium Declaration, Member States agreed to give greater opportunities to the private sector, NGOs and civil society to contribute to realizing UN goals and programmes. Two years later, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report on reforming the UN, addressed a number of issues that have arisen as a result of the “explosive growth” of civil society involvement, including physical resources and accreditation procedures. To achieve “greater coherence, consistency and predictability” in policies and procedures governing civil society interaction, the Secretary-General set up a high-level panel of eminent persons to discuss practical recommendations. The panel (commonly known as the “Cardoso Panel”) reaffirmed the United Nations role as a convener of diverse constituencies—with civil society being an important aspect. While Member States have not taken any formal action on the report, a number of actions have been taken such as the strengthened capacity of UN resident coordinator’s ability to engage with local civic groups and to the establishment of a Trust Fund to support UN country teams work with civil society is underway.

Recent reform efforts throughout the UN system – including the establishment of the Human Rights Council (A/RES/60/251) and the Peacebuilding Commission (A/RES/60/180 and Security Council Resolution 1645)—have included negotiations to determine the

functioning of these bodies and the structures and mechanisms that will be put in place for civil society participation. As this book went to press, negotiations were still underway regarding the exact modalities of the aforementioned entities.

The Secretary-General, in his 2005 report “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all,” wrote that the goals of the United Nations can only be achieved if civil society and governments are fully engaged. Moreover, the Secretary-General’s report on the work of the Organization for the sixty-first session of the GA (A/61/1) included—for the first time—a section dedicated to reviewing the Organization’s work with civil society. There he reaffirmed civil society’s important role at the UN noting that, “today it would be unthinkable to stage such [intergovernmental meetings and conferences] without the policy perspectives, unique advocacy and mobilization of civil society. The engagement of civil society has clearly enhanced the legitimacy, accountability and transparency of intergovernmental decision- making.”

The relationship between non-State actors and the United Nations is an ever-evolving one; and, what the future holds for access and input by civil society remains unclear. However, it is clear that no matter the modalities, civil society will be involved. Ban Ki-moon, the eighth Secretary-General of the UN, noted in his first address to ECOSOC that “today, no UN development effort—whether advocacy for a broad cause or support for specific goals—can make real headway without support from civil society.”

## **About This Book**

The purpose of the following chapters is not to assess and analyze the place and role of NGOs in UN decision-making processes, but to provide basic, practical information to organizations that are interested in participating in concrete ways. The UN can seem a vast and bewildering place, full of undecipherable language, meetings behind closed doors, strange regulations and unwieldy organizational structures. However, understanding how it all works is the critical first step to make in order to be able to participate effectively, whether advocating a position at a world conference or the regional monitoring of an international body or global programme of action. This book does not address operational cooperation between the UN and NGOs, in humanitarian crises and emergencies, in development projects and programmes and other jointly engaged activities, although this too is an area where interaction between the UN and civil society has intensified greatly over the past decade or so.

In its first section, the book presents the bare bones of UN decision making, and how it functions. Chapter one provides essential information on key UN bodies and processes, while chapter two details the lifecycle of a decision, different types of meetings, the system that supports negotiations and how new processes begin. Chapter three chronicles the government blocs that form the negotiating system at the UN, and the way they work. Chapter four lists different kinds of UN documents—the lifeblood of the system—and explains how they are numbered and where to find them. The last part of the section, chapter five, offers definitions of different UN decisions, including how they are commonly used and the level of their political significance.

Section Two is a guide to NGO participation, starting with chapter one on the basics of accreditation for groups that decide to attend

meetings, or want to maintain a regular presence at UN Headquarters or with one of the UN funds, programmes or specialized agencies. Chapter two makes suggestions for preparing for meetings. Chapter three explores strategies for participation and follow-up during and after a meeting, looking at how to approach governments, decode language, collaborate with other organizations and tap the power of the press. The chapter closes with a description of some of the forums where NGOs have been most active in the past, touches upon emerging arenas for attention, and provides some general ideas for follow-up, including through monitoring at the local, national and regional levels.

The Annexes provide a list of NGO Focal Points of the UN system, a list of institutional resources, an excerpt from ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, a description of the DPI Accreditation Process and Criteria, as well as a look at the evolution of civil society engagement over more than 20 years.

# **Section One**

## **Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations**

### **How it works**



# **Chapter 1**

## **The UN: Who Makes Decisions?**

The primary role of the United Nations is to serve as an international forum for addressing a wide range of global concerns. Its work includes intergovernmental negotiations resulting in collective decisions that both guide the work of the United Nations and shape new international, regional and national policies and actions. Aside from governments, a wide variety of stakeholders, including non-governmental and civil society organizations and other actors, attend and in some cases contribute to UN decision-making processes. They do this through formal and informal, direct and indirect advocacy efforts. Only governments can vote and affirm or reject official UN agreements.

Nearly every nation in the world belongs to the UN, with membership totaling 192 countries by the end of June 2006 with the addition of the Republic of Montenegro. States that become Members remain

sovereign countries, but they also agree to uphold the UN Charter, the international treaty that established the UN after World War II. Currently, the Holy See is the only Non-Member State that maintains a permanent mission at UN Headquarters in New York, reflecting its observer status at the General Assembly and its presence at many UN bodies.

More than 40 other “entities” and intergovernmental organizations—such as Palestine, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea—have a standing invitation to participate as observers in the GA. Most recently, the Hague Conference on Private International Law was granted observer status in November 2005 [A/RES/60/27]. A full list of organizations that have been granted observer status with the United Nations is available online:  
*<http://lib-unique.un.org/lib/unique.nsf/Link/R02020>*.

### **Principal Organs**

The UN has three principal decision-making bodies: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Security Council. While the decision-making process is essentially the same across the three, each serves a distinct function and is structured and governed differently. The abiding principle in United Nations decision making is, whenever possible, to reach consensus amongst all participating governments. This is, however, not always possible, and in these cases, a range of mechanisms, such as voting and entering reservations, enables decisions to move forward.

### **The General Assembly**

As the UN’s main deliberative body, the General Assembly has the right to discuss and make recommendations on any matter that falls under the scope of the Charter. These include peace and security,

except when the Security Council is already discussing a situation; political cooperation; international law; human rights; and international collaboration on economic, social, cultural, education and health issues. The General Assembly cannot legally compel governments to act on its decisions, although its recommendations carry the weight of world opinion. How seriously this opinion is taken depends on the perceptions and aims of individual governments, as well as an array of political considerations.

General Assembly decisions also guide much of the year-round work of the UN system. They determine policies and programmes for the UN Secretariat; set goals for development activities; approve the UN and peacekeeping budgets; call for world conferences on major issues; admit new Member States; and appoint the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

**Membership and Voting:** All Member States belong; each is allowed one vote. Decisions on particularly critical questions, such as peace and security, require a two-thirds majority. Other decisions are made with a simple majority.

**Annual sessions:** At the start of each annual General Assembly session, Member States elect a president, 21 vice-presidents and the chairs of the Assembly's six committees. The presidency rotates annually among five regional groups of States: African, Asian, Eastern European, Latin American and Caribbean, and Western European and other States. The General Assembly meets throughout the year, but it convenes its main session at UN Headquarters in New York from early September through mid-December. The main session starts with a two-week general debate attended by Heads of State or Government and ministers. Each year the General Assembly addresses over 150 agenda items, considered either in a plenary session or in one its six committees.

**GA Committee Issues**

The six committees of the General Assembly focus on specific sets of agenda items. Recent examples include:

**First Committee** (Disarmament and International Security): Reduction of military budgets, developments in information and telecommunications in the context of international security, the relationship between disarmament and development, small arms, and review of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

**Second Committee** (Economic and Financial): The international financial system and development, women and development, implementation of Agenda 21, high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership, international migration, and globalization and interdependence.

**Third Committee** (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural): Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons, crime prevention, report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, children's rights, elimination of racism, implementation of human rights instruments, and alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**Fourth Committee** (Special Political and Decolonization): Effects of atomic radiation, peaceful uses of outer space, comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations, information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, and the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

**Fifth Committee** (Administrative and Budgetary): Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the UN, proposed programme budgets, assessments, human resources management, the UN Common System, improving the financial situation of the UN, and the financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

**Sixth Committee** (Legal): Consideration of the report of the International Law Commission, establishment of the International Criminal Court, measures to eliminate international terrorism, and the scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel.

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**The Six Committees:** The large number of items on the General Assembly agenda has required that most be delegated for discussion in six specialized committees. The six committees then meet concurrently to debate specific sets of issues on the agenda, harmonize the points of view of different governments, and draft resolutions for final adoption by the plenary of the General Assembly. The committees include: the First Committee, on disarmament and international security; the Second Committee, on economics and finance; the Third Committee, on social, humanitarian and cultural concerns; the Fourth Committee, on special political and decolonization issues; the Fifth Committee, on administrative and budgetary affairs, and the Sixth Committee, on legal subjects (see box on opposite page).

**Special and Emergency Sessions:** The General Assembly can call special sessions, which may be held at any time of the year, on specific topics requiring debate as it deems necessary. Special sessions meet at the request of the Security Council, a majority of Member States or one Member State with backing from the majority of Member States. An emergency session of the General Assembly may be called to convene within 24 hours of the emergency to be addressed in the following ways: by any nine members of the Security Council, the majority of Member States, or one Member State with majority Member State backing (see box on page 8).

**NGO Participation:** NGOs do not enjoy official consultative status with the General Assembly, although they are allowed to participate in its activities by invitation. It is common practice to invite NGOs to participate in the special sessions of the General Assembly, especially when the special session is undertaking the review of a major conference. In practice, NGOs are actively involved in following the work of some of the six committees. They conduct many forms of advocacy, including meeting regularly with delegates and offering position papers.

### **Special Sessions of the General Assembly**

Up to January 2005, the General Assembly has held 28 special sessions on subjects ranging from apartheid to drug abuse to international economic cooperation to HIV/AIDS. Nearly one-third of them have taken place in the last four years, serving mainly as a way for the General Assembly to review the progress of implementing agreements made at world conferences five and ten years after they took place. The +5 and +10 reviews, as they have become known, have followed up on the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, and the 1996 Conference on Human Settlements. The most recent special session, held in January 2005, commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps (A/RES/59/26).

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### **The Economic and Social Council**

The UN Charter established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as the principal organ to coordinate the economic and social work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and bodies, collectively referred to as the UN system (see Annex II). ECOSOC's activities include formulating policy recommendations, conducting studies, calling for international conferences and coordinating the UN's specialized agencies.

Under the Charter, it is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment and economic and social progress; identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems; facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and freedoms. Article 71 of the Charter designates ECOSOC as having the responsibility of granting consultative status to NGOs. As of January 2007, more than

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## **New UN Entities**

### *Human Rights Council*

The Human Rights Council was established on 15 March 2006 by resolution A/60/251, replacing the Human Rights Commission. The 47-member Council is mandated to meet regularly throughout the year for at least three sessions, including a main session, for a total duration of no less than ten weeks. For further information: [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil).

### *Peacebuilding Commission*

The Peacebuilding Commission aims to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery; help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and sustained financial investment over the medium- to longer-term; extend the period of attention by the international community to post-conflict recovery; and develop best practices on issues that require extensive collaboration among political, military, humanitarian and development actors. It was established by resolution A/RES/60/160 in December 2005. For further information: [www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/docs.htm](http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/docs.htm).

Negotiations are still underway in both the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission to determine the functioning of these bodies and the structures and mechanisms that will be put in place for civil society participation.

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2,870 NGOs have been granted consultative status with ECOSOC. Forty-one NGOs were first granted status in 1948.

**Governance:** Each year ECOSOC members elect a Bureau, comprising a president and four vice-presidents. The presidency rotates among the five regional groups.

**Membership and Voting:** The General Assembly elects 54 Member States to serve three-year terms in ECOSOC. While seeking decisions based on consensus, each member has one vote; voting is by simple majority. Seats are allotted based on geographical representation: 14 for African States, 11 for Asian States, six for Eastern European

States, ten for Latin American and Caribbean States, and 13 for Western European and other States. Some Member States also serve on ECOSOC's array of commissions; they are elected by ECOSOC for three- or four-year terms. While every ECOSOC-related meeting is open to all Member States, only those currently serving a term on the Council can vote in Council matters, and, similarly, only those serving a term on one of its commissions can vote in that commission. The year-round work of the Economic and Social Council is carried out in subsidiary and related bodies, which meet at regular intervals and report back to the Council.

**Commissions and Committees:** Much of ECOSOC's work is carried out in its subsidiary bodies [www.un.org/esa/commissions.html](http://www.un.org/esa/commissions.html). ECOSOC oversees ten functional commissions, five regional commissions, and a number of standing committees and expert bodies, some composed of government experts and some of persons serving in their individual capacity.

**Programmes and Funds:** In addition, 11 UN programmes and funds that deal with economic and social affairs report to ECOSOC through their Executive Boards. These organizations were created by the General Assembly, and include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Council negotiates agreements with the programmes and funds that define their relationship with the UN; coordinates their activities through a process of consultation and recommendations to the General Assembly; and accepts their recommendations for its substantive sessions.

**Specialized Agencies:** ECOSOC also serves as a coordination mechanism for autonomously governed specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which work with the UN and each other. Created separately by member governments, these agencies maintain separate budgets, funding and structures of governance. Under the UN Charter, they are recognized as organizations “brought into agreement” with the United Nations.

**When ECOSOC Meets:** The Council holds one annual four-week substantive session in July, alternating between UN Headquarters in New York and Geneva, and organizational and resumed sessions usually in February, May and October. The substantive session is structured around a series of segments: an operational activities segment, a coordination segment, a humanitarian segment, a general segment, and a high-level segment. During the latter, there is a high-level dialogue at which the heads of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO) address the Economic and Social Council members. Since 2001, the Conference on Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) has organized annual NGO Forums on the theme of the high-level segment just prior to the high-level segment to allow NGOs to express their recommendations to policy makers [www.ngocongo.org](http://www.ngocongo.org). The committees and commissions meet annually or, in some cases, once every two years. Since 1998, ECOSOC has held a special high-level meeting each April with finance ministers heading the key committees of the Bretton Woods Institutions—the World Bank and the IMF.

**NGO Participation:** Guided by the UN Charter, ECOSOC is the one UN body that has established rights for NGOs to observe and contribute to its work. The process of approving NGOs for official consultative status with the Council is handled through the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs. Consultative status offers privileges such as access to meetings of ECOSOC and its commissions, as well as requiring the fulfillment of certain obligations, such as filing a report every four years on an organization's contributions to the work of the UN (see section two, chapter one on NGO accreditation, as well as Annex III).

## **Security Council**

Under the UN Charter, the members of the United Nations have given the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and have agreed to carry out Security Council decisions, making them mandatory on Member States.

When a situation arises that may pose a threat to international peace, the Security Council usually demands that the parties reach a settlement by peaceful means. It can also propose mediation, develop principles for a settlement, or ask the Secretary-General to investigate the situation. If fighting breaks out, the Council will attempt to broker a ceasefire. This can include the use of peacekeeping forces. The Council can enforce its decisions through economic sanctions and collective military action. In 1990, the Council imposed general trade sanctions on Iraq, but since then the Council has imposed more targeted sanctions, including arms embargoes, travel, banks, restrictions on diplomatic relations, and bans on key commodities like petroleum and diamonds on a range of different governments or belligerents in conflicts such as civil wars.

The Security Council also proposes candidates for Secretary-General to the General Assembly, and recommends the admission of new members. It can recommend that the Assembly expel a Member State that has persistently violated the UN Charter, or suspend members against whom the Council has taken preventative or enforcement action.

**Governance:** The presidency of the Council rotates monthly, following the alphabetical order of its members.

**Membership and Voting:** The Council has 15 members. Five are permanent—China, France, the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom. Ten more are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each Council member has one vote. Decisions on procedural matters require at least nine affirmative votes. Decisions on substantive matters require at least nine affirmative votes including those of all the permanent members. A negative vote by any one of the permanent members vetoes the decision. If a permanent member does not support a resolution but does not want to block it, it may abstain.

States and non-State actors have put forth a number of proposals concerning potential reform of the size, composition and work of the Security Council. Concerning size and composition, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/26 in 1993 that established an open-ended working group to consider all aspects of the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council. In 1965 the non-permanent membership of the Security Council was enlarged from six to its present ten. However, any changes in the membership of the Security Council will require an amendment of the Charter, which can only take place with the consent of all the permanent members. During the September 2005 World Summit and the months preceding

it, Member States hotly debated reform of the Security Council, with calls from Member States and civil society for a “democratization” of the Council and the need for more openness in the way the Council works as well as greater transparency in the decision-making procedures. The Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit calls for “early reform” to make the Council more broadly representative, efficient and transparent.

**Committees:** The Security Council regularly establishes committees to monitor situations involving sanctions. In 1999, it also set up a Working Group on General Issues on Sanctions that is developing recommendations on improving the effectiveness of sanctions. In September 2001, the Security Council, through resolution 1373, established a Counter-Terrorism Committee that consists of all 15 members of the Security Council. The resolution called on Member States to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism, refrain from providing any support to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts, and deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support and commit such acts.

**When the Security Council Meets:** The Council is in session throughout the year. A representative of each member is expected to be present at all times at UN Headquarters.

**NGO Participation:** There is currently no formal mechanism for NGO participation in the Security Council’s discussions. To contribute information, expertise and knowledge, NGO representatives meet informally with Member States who are on the Security Council. In recent years, however, the Security Council has held a number of informal meetings or briefings to solicit NGO contributions, including under the Arria Formula rules, which allow non-governmental voices to give testimony in relation to specific crises or issues related

to the Council's work. Recent examples have included sessions on the humanitarian situation in a number of countries, small arms, protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and war, and the issue of women, peace and security.

### **Special Events: A Focus on an Issue**

Aside from the ongoing discussions held in the main UN organs, Member States may also decide to hold special intergovernmental events focusing on particularly timely or urgent issues. These include world conferences, summits and special sessions of the General Assembly. More recently, since June 2005, these have also included informal, interactive hearings convened by the General Assembly with non-governmental and civil society organizations and other actors in the lead up to high-level meetings or dialogues on a range of subjects.

**Conferences and Summits:** UN world conferences and summits are held when Member States collectively agree that an issue needs widespread political and public attention—women, children, poverty, the environment and financing for development are some prominent examples from the last decade. These gatherings draw high-level political participation, including from Heads of State and Government (summits are designed specifically for this level); they mobilize governments, international institutions, NGOs and civil society to push for action on urgent global problems; and they attract the interest of millions around the world through extensive media coverage.

Specifically, they provide a forum for Member States to introduce emerging issues for debate, and establish internationally agreed standards that can steer international, regional and national policies. They start a process where governments make commitments to actions,

including later reporting back to the UN on progress that they have made. They also provide an opportunity for NGOs and civil society to engage with governments and UN officials, enliven policy debate, and raise issues that might otherwise be ignored. Many of these events in recent years have also included parallel NGO forums. These forums provide a structured meeting place for persons and groups interested in the subject matter of the government conference. While there is no formal interchange between the NGO forum and the delegations to the international conference, the two events can and do influence each other. Over 20,000 participants took part in the Global People's Forum held parallel to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (South Africa) in August-September 2002.

**High-level Meetings and Interactive Hearings:** Starting in 2005, informal, interactive hearings convened by the General Assembly with non-governmental and civil society organizations and other actors have been held in the lead-up to the high-level meetings or dialogues held on various issues.

In June 2005, informal interactive hearings were held with NGOs, civil society and the private sector, providing the participants to comment on the Secretary-General's report *In Larger Freedom* (A/59/2005) and the draft Outcome Document of the High-Level Plenary of the General Assembly of the September 2005 Summit. This unprecedented event involved over 230 participants, of which 35 delivered statements, with an additional 360 NGO representatives attending the proceedings as observers. The hearings presented a fresh approach in Member State/civil society engagement as it aimed to create an environment for interaction between parties, while showcasing the views of civil society in an organized fashion on multiple sets of issues.

In 2006, a series of General Assembly hearings were held, bringing together non-governmental and civil society organizations and the private sector to: review progress in implementing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (in the lead-up to a high-level meeting); discuss international migration and development (followed by a high-level dialogue in September 2006); and the midterm review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (followed by a high-level meeting in September 2006).

**Online consultations and Internet dialogue:** With the spread of access to information communication technologies (ICTs), the United Nations has been using various forms of online consultation, usually in the form of e-mail submission forms or online discussion boards, in a number of different areas. During the lead-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and afterwards, online consultations were held on several topics in the hope of allowing all interested stakeholders to contribute. In the lead-up to the 2005 UN World Summit, NGLS organized an online consultation for civil society to respond to the Secretary-General's report *In Larger Freedom* (A/59/2005) and compiled their comments, making the compilation available to both the June 2005 Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly with NGOs, Civil Society and the Private Sector, and the September 2005 World Summit itself. NGLS carried out a similar exercise ahead of the September 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, with the compilation of NGO responses circulated to the June 2006 General Assembly Informal Interactive Hearings with NGOs, Civil Society and the Private Sector and to the high-level event itself in September 2006. Habitat Jam, a UN-HABITAT Internet event, took place in December 2005 as part of preparations for the World Urban Forum.

During the 72-hour event, tens of thousands of people around the world connected in real time to discuss, debate and collaborate on key urban issues and to work towards finding solutions [www.habitatjam.com/index.php](http://www.habitatjam.com/index.php).

A four-week-long moderated e-Discussion entitled “Strengthening Efforts to Eradicate Poverty and Hunger” was initiated in March 2007 as part of a larger process of global consultation – ECOSOC’s Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) – that assesses the progress in implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Throughout the process views were sought on four priority themes, as well as ideas on how to improve global cooperation, coordination and coherence of efforts to meet development objectives.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Negotiations: How Are Decisions Made?**

At the start of any decision-making process, governments propose, individually or collectively, that a particular issue be raised in the appropriate forum, such as the General Assembly, ECOSOC or through a world conference. The participating governments discuss the issue and negotiate the written language of a draft agreement, the decision being adopted in one of a variety of formats. The vast majority of UN decisions appear as resolutions, which are relatively short texts and documents that include preambular background paragraphs followed by a list of operative paragraphs, or agreements on future actions. Other outcomes include declarations, which are fairly concise statements conveying a high level of political concern; programmes of action, which call upon governments to take a series of actions voluntarily; and complex and legally binding conventions and treaties, which may require countries to make changes in their own domestic laws. Governments also make decisions on organizational issues,

which are meant to guide the structure and administration of a negotiating process. These can include the election of officers for a meeting, the adoption of the agenda and the determination of who may attend negotiations aside from Member States.

### **The Lifecycle of a Decision**

Whatever format a decision takes, it starts as a draft text that is prepared by one of several sources, generally based on advance inputs from governments. The initial draft can be prepared by the Secretariat, the chair of the negotiations, a group of delegations such as the European Union (EU) or the Group of 77 developing countries and China (G-77/China), an individual delegate or a facilitator specially appointed for the task. In the case of resolutions, one or more “sponsor” governments may draft the text, which the Secretariat then registers and distributes as an official document. Those responsible for drafting will work in close consultations with delegates before the formally scheduled negotiations begin.

The draft text then becomes the focus of discussion and reaction among governments. Delegates go through the text from start to finish, agree on minor adjustments, identify those passages that they cannot easily accept and offer amendments that could be deletions or additions. The Secretariat may produce a compilation of all versions proposed. As the areas of agreement and disagreement become clear, a draft text is prepared denoting areas of disagreement usually in square brackets. Secretariat staff normally monitor and record changes as they occur. A succession of additional sessions is held, under the authority of the chair or a facilitator, where delegates narrow down their differences, eliminating the brackets when a portion of language is agreed. Some check back and forth with officials in

their mission or capital, seeking guidance on how far they may compromise. Sometimes delegates agree to language *ad referendum*, which means they must check with their capital or ministry for final approval.

As negotiations near their conclusion, there may be some “give-and-take” as delegates consider the balance of elements in the “package,” and whether they can let go of some pieces in order to retain others. When all the participating governments finally reach agreement on the exact wording of all portions of the text, they adopt it officially. If all Member States are willing to accept the agreement, then it is adopted by consensus. In some cases, however, delegates cannot reach agreement and the Chair may finally call for Member States to vote either for or against the proposal or to abstain. On occasion, a Member State may call for a roll-call vote to place on the record the vote of individual Member States. During a roll-call vote, the chairperson will call each country’s name, and the possible response is: Yes, No, or Abstain.

If a Member State wishes to place their views on record, they may offer an explanation of their vote either before or after the vote itself. Another way for Member States to express disagreement with the text or part of a text is by entering a reservation after adoption. This indicates that a Member State does not agree to comply with one or more of the document’s provisions. Reservations are intended to be used only temporarily, indicating that States agree with the decision in principle even if they are currently unable to realize it. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary-General. Another way for Member States to express disapproval with the text is to issue an “interpretive statement” to define their position and what the language in question means or does not mean to them.

## **Evolution of an Agreement**

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- Election of officers for the meeting; agreement on organizational issues.
  - Preparation and consideration of initial draft outcome text.
  - Integration of agreed changes and proposals by the Secretariat, the chair or a facilitator. Proposals for deletions of existing text or additions of new text are marked with square brackets (or equivalent) and a revised text is distributed.
  - Additional rounds of negotiations and changes. Square brackets are removed from text as delegates reach agreement.
  - The final text, adopted by consensus.
  - Notification of any reservations by individual governments.
  - For legally binding instruments: ratification.
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In the case of legally binding treaties, these have to be signed and then be ratified by each signatory or participating Member State. This allows governments time to seek domestic approval of the agreement, generally through parliamentary or other legislative bodies, since existing domestic law may have to be changed, or new laws created.

## **Types of Meetings for Negotiations**

Negotiating processes at the UN usually take place in two sessions a day, in the morning and the afternoon. If the debate becomes protracted, extra evening sessions may be scheduled. It is not uncommon for the final sessions to be extended, possibly throughout the night, to complete the negotiations.

Sessions take place in two formats: open or closed. Open or formal sessions, which are part of the official record, can be attended by everyone with proper accreditation, including NGOs and the media. These usually include plenary sessions, where all delegates participate. Plenary sessions normally open an intergovernmental session, and are where Member States make their individual policy statements. They are also the forums where formal decisions are made,

including the final adoption of an agreed text, by consensus or a vote, or the noting of reservations.

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### *The Daily Journal*

All formal meetings at the United Nations are listed each day in *The Daily Journal*, a publication that is available throughout UN buildings in New York: at entrances, in press rooms, in NGO centres and at document windows. It can also be found online at [www.un.org/Docs/journal/latest.htm](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/latest.htm).

The *Journal*, as it is known, lists all formal meetings and working groups meeting during the day. It notes whether the meeting is open or closed, and contains a list of the relevant UN documents for the meeting, as well as newly issued UN documents.

In Geneva, *UN Geneva on the Wires* is available online: at [www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch) as part of the United Nations Information Service in Geneva. A calendar of upcoming meetings, press conferences and briefings, as well as press releases are also available.

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When governments reach the point in a negotiating process where they need to hammer out agreement on particularly contentious topics, they may break into informal sessions, often called working groups. These can be closed to everyone except delegates and Secretariat staff, although NGOs may also be allowed to attend as observers, depending to some extent on past practice in a given process and the discretion of the Chairperson. The deliberations in informal sessions are not included in the official record. Delegates maintain they will make more progress if they can speak and debate freely among themselves and deal with sensitive issues without the constraints of the public spotlight. A negotiating process that is working on a long document may ask delegations to break into a number of informal working groups, with each taking a specific issue or section of the text. In theory only two working groups can meet at any given time, in order to accommodate smaller delegations.

In some cases, governments form contact groups, or hold informal informals, which are strictly off-limits to anyone except a core group of delegates. These meet outside the main negotiation rooms, generally at a time and place announced in the working group, and bring together only those governments with a strong interest in a particular issue that has caused disagreement. Contact groups seek to bring widely conflicting positions closer together, before presenting the results of the discussions to the meeting at large. They also save time by allowing concerned delegates to have a detailed discussion while the rest of the working group continues its deliberations.

Towards the end of complicated negotiations, when the time pressure is great, delegates may huddle, either in or across the negotiating groups, on the negotiating floor itself to hammer out last minute details. Truly sticky issues often end up being tackled by measures such as the use of a facilitator, an extended Bureau, or “friends of the Chair.” The Chair, working with a handful of governments on a particularly contentious subject, may have to use all his or her powers of persuasion or creative suggestions on new language in order to bring about consensus.

### **The Bureau**

Most negotiating processes are overseen by a Bureau. Appointed at the outset by the consensus of Member States, it always consists of at least five members from the five regions, and includes a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur. In some situations, an extended Bureau is deemed necessary. This might include a representative from the host country (for a meeting outside the usual UN venues), the chair of the Group of 77 developing countries and China (G-77/China), a coordinator for the least developed countries (LDCs), and other representatives who are considered particularly important to the process.

Member States used to consider Bureau membership mainly as a position bolstering their prestige. However, in the last decade there has been a shift in favour of more active Bureaus, and there is a growing sense that Bureau members contribute to the success or failure of a process. While Bureaus used to coalesce just for the formal meeting sessions, some now consult regularly in advance of meetings. They may have close contact with Secretariats, and conduct informal briefings and consultations with Member States to prepare for the formal meetings and negotiations.

### **The Secretariat**

The various institutional arms of the UN support all intergovernmental negotiations and decisions. Based in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the UN Secretariat manages the administration of the UN as a whole, making the arrangements necessary to allow Member States to meet and do their work. The UN also has five regional commissions: the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA).

The Secretariat provides logistical services, coordinates the dissemination of public information, prepares analyses and statistics, and guides delegates through the rules of protocol and procedure that govern intergovernmental negotiations. In some cases, the Secretariat convenes expert groups and prepares questionnaires for Member States to collect national data. Issue experts may also draft initial documents for negotiations.

Headed by the Secretary-General, the Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the UN carries out decisions specified by the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC and other UN bodies. The Secretary-General carries out two roles: as the chief administrative officer and as the world's senior diplomat who maintains close contact with government delegates and frequently speaks in debates. As an institutional mechanism, the Secretariat makes a direct input into many processes by issuing substantive reports, which are prepared by the appropriate department of the Secretariat. Each year the Secretary-General issues a report on the work of the UN that appraises its activities and outlines future priorities.

For major world conferences or other special events, a separate conference Secretariat may be established and headed by a conference Secretary-General, as was the case for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in two phases in 2003 and 2005.

A range of UN funds and agencies also contribute to and are shaped by the United Nations' political processes. They frequently participate in intergovernmental processes by speaking to delegates and providing reports and other forms of background information. Negotiated decisions may call upon these organizations to carry out specific activities or assist in reaching certain internationally agreed goals.

### **How New Negotiating Processes Begin**

The impetus for holding intergovernmental talks outside the routinely scheduled discussions of the main UN forums—such as a conference, summit or special session—always begins with the political initiative of one or more Member States. When political momentum begins to build, sponsoring governments craft a proposed resolution calling for

the meeting; this is then debated, modified and adopted in the General Assembly or ECOSOC. The resolution not only requests that the conference be held, but it also spells out the goals, agenda and the preparatory process. It may denote specific details, such as the number of people who will serve on the meeting's Bureau, when the first global preparatory meeting will be held, and the procedures for the participation of NGOs.

Once the resolution is agreed, a conference Secretariat is set up, either within or separately from the UN Secretariat. It begins preparing documents and circulating them to Member States. National governments may establish national preparatory committees to draw up their own positions and policies, and to prepare reports and collect data on issues related to achievements, obstacles, best practices and so on.

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### **Anatomy of a Conference**

- Informal Proposals
  - Debate Among Governments
  - Passing of a Resolution
  - National and Regional Preparations
  - PrepComs Begin Negotiating an Outcome Document
  - The Conference is held, often consensus has been reached on most issues prior to the event and negotiations conclude
  - Member States Officially Adopt the Document
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Meetings held in preparation for conferences, special sessions and other time-bound processes follow a specific format. Once governments agree to convene in one of these forums, they also initiate the process to prepare for it, often in the form of a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom). In a series of advance sessions, PrepComs handle the bulk of the negotiating required to develop the long and often complex agreements issued by conferences and special sessions. If the work is not completed by the time of the conference or meeting itself, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole (COW) is set up to finish it. It may

convene informal working group sessions to continue negotiations, while the conference plenary meets concurrently to hear general debate and make formal decisions. In some cases, the Ad Hoc COW meets formally and separately from the Plenary in order to accommodate long lists of speakers spilling over from the general debate.

A series of regional intergovernmental meetings may also begin—on social and economic issues—and are generally coordinated by the ECOSOC regional economic commissions. They allow Member States to bring their national priorities to a regional forum; to discuss and negotiate common regional objectives; and to make recommendations to the global preparatory meetings.

At the international level, a PrepCom is formed, as is a Bureau for the PrepCom. Its major task is to initiate negotiations on a final outcome document: the majority of recommendations and outcomes are determined during the preparatory process. The PrepCom meets up to four times between the passage of the resolution calling for the meeting and the actual event. These sessions may run from one to four weeks, and are mainly held at UN facilities in New York, Geneva, Vienna or Nairobi.

The first substantive meeting of the PrepCom normally determines the basic elements and form of the final document. In later meetings, the PrepCom begins the concentrated work of negotiating the fine print, going through the outcome document line by line. Generally, the document is more than half finished by the time of the event, with only the most contentious issues outstanding. Reaching consensus on these subjects often requires the presence of the high-level government officials who attend the meeting, as well as the pressure of agreeing on the document before the meeting closes.

# **Chapter 3**

## **The Negotiators: Building “Blocs” of Power**

The negotiating system at the UN functions in large part through negotiating blocs, or groups of countries speaking with a common voice. These alliances may be fluid—but some are long institutionalized. Allegiances and antagonisms may shift depending on how the political winds outside the UN are blowing, yet some general rules apply: industrialized, mainly western, countries tend to share similar points of view on subjects such as support for human rights, a free market economy and issues of international development co-operation. Developing countries come together over some common economic issues such as fair access to the global economy and access to markets, while struggling to reconcile different points of view in areas such as environmental protection, and on social and cultural issues such as women’s rights.

While Member States are always entitled to speak independently, negotiating blocs allow nations to build on a position of strength in numbers. In some cases, they can help negotiations move forward, because consensus has already been reached among at least the members of the group. However, members also may have their own widely divergent positions. Bridging these can take time and result in general positions of little interest to some of the group members.

Some blocs appear in every set of negotiations. The European Union always speaks with one voice, because it is a legally established formal entity. The Group of 77 and China strive to present the perspectives of the developing world as a whole, although it does not consistently maintain a unified front. Other blocs form just for the duration of a particular set of talks, or emerge over the years. Some permanent groupings are active in UN deliberations only on certain issues. A number of Member States operate independently of negotiating blocs, but may also associate with them on occasion. Below are some of the groups that have been active recently:

- The African Union (AU): formerly the Organization of African Unity was formed to advance stability, development, trade and the wellbeing of the African continent. It includes 53 UN Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry (Guinea), Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. More information is available online: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org).

- The European Union (EU): EU members, under the terms of their Treaties, must negotiate together. As of January 2007, the EU currently comprises Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. More information is available online: <http://europa.eu>.
- The Group of 77 and China (G-77/China): A longstanding bloc established in 1967, the G-77/China has become the voice of most developing countries, representing the positions of its 130 members, particularly on economic issues. More information is available online: [www.g77.org/doc](http://www.g77.org/doc).
- Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (JUS-CANZ): A political grouping of the non-EU industrialized countries listed together with Iceland, Mexico and the Republic of Korea.
- Non-Aligned Movement (NAM): NAM was created in 1961 at the height of East-West friction to provide an independent forum for its mainly developing country members. NAM has 117 members from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In the UN it focuses on political issues, while the G-77/China emphasizes development. More information is available online: [www.nam.gov.za](http://www.nam.gov.za).
- The Rio Group: Created in 1986 as a permanent mechanism for political consultation and consensus of the countries from Latin and Central America and some Caribbean countries. It sometimes develops positions and negotiates as a group at the UN on issues of human rights, governance and trade to be able to take different stances than those of the G-77/China. The 20 members of the Rio Group include

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

- Southern African Countries: These countries, all members of the G-77/China, have not created a formal negotiating group, but they occasionally work and speak together on issues when there is not a G-77/China position, e.g. social issues, women's rights.
- The Caribbean Community (CARICOM): Includes all English-speaking countries of the region—Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, with five associate members. More information is available online: [www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org).
- The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS): AOSIS is an informal alliance of small island and low-lying coastal developing countries formed in 1990 to address member interests in negotiations on climate change and related issues. AOSIS has a membership of 43 States and observers, drawn from all oceans and regions of the world: Africa, Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Pacific and South China Sea. More information is available online: [www.sidsnet.org/aosis](http://www.sidsnet.org/aosis).
- Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC): The OIC is an intergovernmental organization set up in 1969 with 57 members that include Islamic States as well as countries with a significant Islamic community. It is the only grouping in the UN that recognizes the connection between religion and politics and is active on social and cultural issues and Palestine. More information is available online: [www.oic-oci.org](http://www.oic-oci.org).

- **Western European and Other Groups (WEOG):** A geo-political grouping of States that share a Western-Democratic common denominator. It comprises 27 Member States plus the United States, who is not officially in WEOG.
- **Regional groups:** UN Member States participate in regional groups for the purposes of identifying regional candidates for the UN inter-governmental bodies. The African and Latin American groups also discuss substantive positions.

In addition to negotiating independently or as part of a group, delegates also make alliances that never appear in the public view, as many negotiations take place long before delegates reach the conference room floor. Diplomats huddle in the UN’s corridors, meet over coffee or cocktails, gather in the delegates’ lounge, and negotiate over the phones at their missions. Those who have served for a long period in any of the main UN locations, such as New York, have long histories together, and know exactly how far they can push their issues and who they can expect to offer support or opposition.

### **Tactics and Trade-Offs**

Diplomats, both individually and in negotiating blocs, use many strategies to advance their positions. Here are some common ploys:

- *Never Reveal All Your Positions:* This is standard diplomatic practice. Compromises at the United Nations fit together like a puzzle: delegates offer the pieces one at a time, keeping in mind the need to achieve a handful of their most desired objectives.
- *Offer Hard-line Language:* All government proposals must be considered, so some delegates will offer what they know is an unacceptable position in order to bring other countries closer to what they want, at which point they will trade it in for a compromise.

- *Hold Off Until the End*: The most difficult passages are always finished last. At this point, everyone will have a sense of the compromises everyone else has made, and will be able to assess how much room there is to manoeuvre on the stickiest points.
- *Leave the Room*: Delegates who may not want to speak or vote for the record may simply decide to go out for a break.

### **Who Sits on Delegations?**

Most Member States maintain permanent missions to the United Nations in New York (and in some cases to the United Nations in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna as well). These missions are staffed year round with diplomats who attend to routine and ongoing processes and debates. Since the UN is viewed by most governments as the key international arena to express their foreign policy goals, diplomats often come from the Foreign Ministry.

For special conferences or other events, diplomats and government officials may come in from capitals. These delegations usually comprise one or two top government officials, up to the Head of State or Government; senior ministry representatives; technical experts; representatives from the mission or embassy where the meeting is being held; and sometimes NGOs and members of the private sector, although this is not obligatory.

High-level officials, such as Heads of State, generally do not participate directly in negotiations. They are more likely to be found in closed bilateral or small high-level meetings or delivering plenary speeches that outline their government's position on an issue.

# Chapter 4

## Tracking Negotiations and Decisions Through Documents

Different kinds of documents form the substance and guide every aspect of the UN decision-making process. Each round of negotiation includes the following general categories of documents: those related to organizational issues; government and other statements; information on the issue at hand, such as reports from the Secretary-General; and a draft text or texts that delegates use for negotiations. Many documents carry an official number and appear in the six official languages of the UN: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

### **Organizational Issues**

**The agenda:** The agenda is normally proposed and passed in the first session of a meeting. It outlines the schedule for the negotiations and what will be discussed.

**The report of the meeting:** The report is generally adopted at the last session. It includes a detailed record of who attended, how many sessions were held, what decisions were made on organizational issues and what the final outcome was.

### **Negotiations**

The text of a negotiated agreement can travel through many different versions and revisions in the course of a negotiating process. In general, the debate relies most heavily on two kinds of documents: those presented as the foundation for discussion towards an agreement, which are regularly revised and updated, and the various proposals, additions and corrections submitted during the course of the meeting.

**The draft outcome text:** The draft outcome text is the basis on which governments negotiate. The process of writing this document, often drafted by the Secretariat, generally involves the solicitation of views from participating governments and UN agencies concerned with the subject being discussed. In some cases, NGOs and other stakeholders may have been invited to contribute as well.

**Chair's text:** At times, in order to bridge differences on some of the more difficult issues or final compromise text, the chair of the meeting will draft a text, lending political authority to persuade delegates to accept the text without much revision and move forward.

**Facilitator's text:** If a process has appointed a facilitator to assist the negotiations, he or she listens to input from governments and then drafts a new or revised text. This document may be accepted by delegations as expressing their areas of agreement or may become the basis for continuing line-by-line negotiations.

**Government proposals:** Once a text enters negotiations, individual governments or negotiating blocs offer their proposed amendments. Much of this process takes place orally, with governments suggesting changes in their interventions from the floor. More complicated passages, or passages negotiated separately by a small group of governments, are often submitted in written form.

**Compilation text:** Periodically during the negotiations, the Secretariat will issue a compilation text that includes all agreed changes or additional proposals. This document then becomes the basis for continued discussions.

**Working papers:** Prepared by Member States, the Secretariat or chair or president of an intergovernmental body, working papers provide background and substantive information pertinent to the issue at hand.

**Conference room papers:** Those in the room where negotiations are taking place have access to conference room papers, which can include government proposals for changes to the text under deliberation, or additional reports or information on the subject at hand.

**Non-papers:** These are prepared primarily by government representatives to facilitate the negotiating process and contain proposals and amendments on the text under consideration. They often do not bear a document number, and are not considered part of the official record of the meeting.

**Modifications:** These include: addendums; alterations of a portion of adopted text by a competent authority; corrigendums, which may not apply to all language versions; summarized versions; and the re-issuance of a document for technical reasons.

## **For Information**

**Statements from governments, international organizations and NGOs:** Negotiations generally open in formal sessions where delegates as well as speakers from international organizations and accredited NGOs outline their positions on the issues under discussion. Printed copies of these speeches are often available in the conference room. Increasingly the Internet is being used as a vehicle for distribution.

**Reports from the Secretary-General:** The office of the Secretary-General provides detailed reports on subjects related to the negotiations, including background material, a sense of global perspective and information on impact on the UN system. These reports may incorporate information from governments on situations within individual countries.

**Technical reports:** These elucidate additional details on a topic under consideration.

**Letters from governments:** Used as a way to bring official texts negotiated by organizations outside the UN to the UN's attention. Reports of commissions, committees, ad hoc bodies and other previous meetings: They include the previous agenda, lists of participants, and a record of what was discussed and agreed.

**Information series:** General information, such as lists of participants.

**Press releases:** The Department of Public Information issues press releases on the same day as most open meetings. It also compiles Daily Highlights, summaries of daily UN-related events around the world.

## Document Symbols

Documents officially issued by the Secretariat are tracked and identified by type through symbols combining strings of letters and numbers. Several components, separated by vertical slashes, make up each symbol, which remains the same across all language versions of a document.

Generally, the first component of a symbol reflects the main body issuing or accepting the document. These include:

- A/- for the General Assembly
- S/- for the Security Council
- E/- for ECOSOC
- ST/- for the Secretariat

However, some subsidiary organs carry their own special symbol:

- HRC/- for the Human Rights Council
- CRC/C- for the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- DP/- for the UN Development Programme
- TD/- for the UN Conference on Trade and Development
- UNEP/- for the UN Environment Programme
- CAT/C/- for the Committee Against Torture
- CEDAW/C/- for the Committee on the Elimination of  
Discrimination Against Women
- CERD/C/- for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial  
Discrimination

Secondary and tertiary components indicate subsidiary bodies:

- /AC. .../- for ad hoc committee
- /C. .../- for standing, permanent or main committee
- /CN. .../- for commission
- /CONF. .../- for conference
- /GC. .../- for governing council

- /PC. .../- for preparatory committee
- /SC. .../- for subcommittee
- /Sub. .../- for subcommission
- /WG. .../- for working group

For the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council, the second component may indicate the session or year of the meeting that produced the document. ECOSOC commissions are given a number: the Commission on the Status of Women, for example, is designated CN.6.

Additional components reflect the nature of the document:

- /INF/- for information series
- /L. .../- for limited distribution, generally of draft documents
- /NGO/- for statements by NGOs
- /PET/- for petitions
- /PRST/- for statements by the president of the Security Council
- /PV. ... for verbatim records of meetings
- /R. ... for restricted distribution
- /RES/ for resolutions
- /SR. ... for summary records of meetings
- /WP. ... for working papers

The final component may denote simply the sequence number of a document in a session or process, or describe modifications to the original text, for instance:

- /Add. ... for an addendum
- /Amend. ... for an alteration
- /Corr. ... for a corrigendum
- /Rev. ... for a revision
- /Summary for a summarized version
- /\_\* for re-issuance for technical reasons

Underneath each symbol is a date that refers to the date of issuance of the document from the substantive UN department and its registration with the documents control office. On the lower left-hand corner of the document is the date upon which editing, translating and printing were completed; often, there is a substantial gap between issuance and completion. For GA resolutions, the date of adoption appears at the end of the text.

### **How to Find Documents**

Many UN documents can now be found on the Internet—both texts that will be discussed and those that have already been agreed (see United Nations Documentation Research Guide online at [www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide](http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide)). General Assembly resolutions, for example, are listed by session under the GA's section of the UN website. Documents for special conferences or processes may appear on websites specifically organized for the event.

Once a meeting starts, counters for distributing UN documents are usually located in the rooms where negotiations take place, but these are often restricted to delegates or UN staff. If a room has been allocated for NGO use, the relevant documents may be delivered directly there.

Documents that have already been printed help provide background information and distil a general sense of the issues under consideration. But as delegates negotiate, draft texts that appeared on Monday morning may be substantially different by Monday afternoon. Governments regularly submit new proposals. These are then photocopied by the Secretariat and distributed to other delegates.

**Examples of Symbols**

- A/56/1 indicates the first document considered by the General Assembly in its 56th session.
  - E/CN.4/1999/SR.60 is the summary record of the 60th meeting of the 54th session of the Commission on Human Rights.
  - UNEP/GC.18/29/Corr.1 comes from the 18th session of the UNEP Governing Council, document number 29, corrigendum number one.
  - A/C.2/57/L.6 is a document of limited distribution, often a draft resolution, from the 2nd committee of the General Assembly in its 57th session.
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Sometimes, extra copies are placed on document tables at the back of the room, which are available for those in attendance at the meeting.

A recent trend has been to project the text of negotiations onto a large screen that is operated by Secretariat staff working on a computer. Governments read out their proposals, which are typed in and appear on the screen, usually in a different color or text style.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Outcomes: The Nature of UN Decisions**

The variety of forums in which United Nations negotiations take place may appear to be independently organized, with different diplomats participating and different parts of the United Nations coordinating the logistics of the work. But since UN debates unfurl within a given political climate, different decision-making processes and their outcomes are closely linked. An agreement struck in one forum may rest upon a compromise reached in another. When consensus proves elusive, delegates may refer back to the language of the last consensus on an issue.

Not all United Nations decisions carry the same weight, however. Their importance varies depending on what kind of document they appear in, and which body has issued them. A legally binding treaty has to be taken more seriously than a plan of action articulating a set of political commitments. A General Assembly resolution carries more weight than one from an ECOSOC commission. The type of instrument used to convey a decision is usually determined by an issue's gravity and political implications.

*Some common examples of UN decisions include:*

**Agreements:** In its broadest sense, agreements refer to all consensus decisions made by Member States, whether or not they are legally binding. Under a more narrow definition, an agreement is less formal than a treaty and deals with a more limited range of issues. It is used particularly for technical or administrative instruments that may be signed by government representatives, but are not subject to ratification, the international act whereby a State indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty. Agreements in this sense often deal with economic, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation issues, as well as some financial matters. Most international instruments are now designated as agreements.

**Resolutions:** This is the formal decision used by UN organs, such as the General Assembly, to express an agreement or conclusion. Resolutions include a preamble, which sets forth the basis on which action should be taken, and a series of operative paragraphs that spell out actions or directives.

**Decisions:** This denotes formal action that is not a resolution and that usually deals with organizational matters such as elections, appointments or the place of meetings.

**Treaties:** A treaty refers generically to all instruments that are legally binding under international law. Several criteria apply: the contracting parties must intend to create legal rights and duties; the instrument must be concluded by States or international organizations with treaty-making power; the treaty must be governed by international law; and it must be in writing. Usually, treaties are reserved for matters that require more solemn or politically important agreements. They normally involve ratification by each government in order to go into effect.

**Conventions:** The generic use of the term “convention” is synonymous with the generic use of the term “treaty” — it can cover all legally binding international agreements. It may also refer to a group of laws apart from international customary rules and general principles of international law. As a specific term, convention is now mainly used for formal multilateral treaties with a broad number of parties, such as the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. Conventions can also be adopted by an organ of an international organization, such as the General Assembly’s 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Protocols:** A protocol focuses on specific issues or areas within a treaty or convention. It includes several different instruments. A protocol of signature is subsidiary to a treaty and drawn up by the same parties. It deals with ancillary matters such as the interpretation of particular clauses and is ratified along with the treaty. An optional protocol establishes additional rights and obligations to a treaty; it is subject to independent ratification. This kind of protocol allows some treaty parties to reach beyond the general agreement of all treaty signatories. A prominent example would be the 1999 Optional Protocol to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Its provisions include allowing individuals or groups of women to formally petition about human rights violations directly to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

A protocol based on a framework treaty specifies substantive obligations in order to implement a previous convention. They have been used particularly in international environmental law, for instance with the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was followed by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which, among other things, sets forth legally binding emissions targets for gases such as carbon

dioxide. A protocol to amend contains provisions that amend one or more former treaties. A protocol as a supplementary treaty contains supplementary provisions to a previous treaty.

**Charters:** This is the most solemn and formal instrument of international agreement, generally reserved for treaties that create new international organizations, such as the 1945 Charter of the United Nations.

**Declarations:** Declarations lie somewhere between resolutions and conventions and some can also carry the weight of customary law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They convey a high level of aspiration and political commitment, usually adopted at the Head of State or Government level. A recent example would be the 2000 Millennium Declaration, a compilation of priority actions adopted by a record 189 Heads of State or Government at the Millennium General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000. An interpretative declaration may be annexed to a treaty to explain its provisions.

**Programmes or Platforms for Action:** These are blueprints for a series of actions that governments have agreed should be taken on a specific set of issues at the national, regional and international levels. As statements primarily of political will and commitment, they are not legally binding. Most world conferences have agreed on plans or platforms for action.

**Agreed Conclusions:** In some cases, governments decide to conclude a meeting with a negotiated outcome but without commitments for action by governments. These “agreed conclusions” can set the basis for policy development.

**Chair's Summary:** A chair's summary expresses the sense and direction of a meeting without including commitments for action by governments. It enables views expressed or the deliberations of a special segment to be included in the official record of a meeting.

**Sanctions:** The Security Council may impose sanctions on one or more Member States in situations where it decides that these are the most effective way to maintain international peace and security. Mandatory sanctions generally follow the failure of diplomatic efforts. Sanctions may encompass comprehensive economic and trade measures or specifically target areas such as arms purchases, travel or diplomatic exchanges.

**Memorandum of Understanding:** This is a less formal agreement that often sets out operational arrangements under an international framework agreement. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) typically does not require ratification, and can be entered into either by States or international organizations. The UN, for example, establishes an MOU with Member States to organize peacekeeping operations or arrange UN conferences.



## **Section 2**

# **Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations**

## **A Guide to NGO Participation**



# **A Guide to NGO Participation**

## **by Gretchen Sidhu\***

NGOs have been active in the United Nations since its founders committed themselves to non-governmental participation. Article 71 of the UN Charter reads: “The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for the consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.”

This article and the arrangements established by ECOSOC form the basis for NGO engagement with governments at the UN and establish

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guidelines for the UN Secretariat when dealing with NGOs (see Annex III). These procedures and arrangements also govern or guide UN agencies and programmes in their relations with NGOs. Formal ongoing relationships of NGOs with the UN are based on two main activities: consultative status and information outreach. The first type is facilitated by the NGO Section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which handles the process by which NGOs gain consultative status with ECOSOC through its Committee on NGOs. The second relationship is established through the NGO Section of the Department of Public Information (DPI, see Annex IV). The Department associates organizations working on public outreach.

The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) occupies a unique place and role in relations between the UN system and NGOs. As an inter-agency programme, NGLS is mandated to support the organizations of the UN in developing their relations with NGOs and wider civil society and also to support the constructive engagement of NGOs and CSOs in the work and governance of the UN system. NGLS collaborates with national and regional NGOs from developing and industrialized countries, and with international NGO networks and NGOs in consultative relationship with the UN through information outreach and inreach, and through hands-on advice and other forms of support in order to facilitate and enhance their activities around UN conferences, events and processes.

With NGO activity now at an unprecedented level, NGOs can be found across the UN system, speaking to governments, serving on panels, holding briefings, forming issue caucuses, offering technical expertise, advocating on the national level, and implementing UN-related projects. NGO involvement varies across different subjects, bodies and processes, depending to some degree on the momentum of civil society activism outside the United Nations. NGOs have been

consistently active at some of the UN bodies that meet regularly, primarily the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the recently formed Human Rights Council, although modalities for their participation are still being negotiated. They have also played key roles in intergovernmental deliberations on the International Criminal Court, landmines, HIV/AIDS and most recently the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in December 2006.

In his first address to ECOSOC in January 2007, the eighth UN Secretary-General, Ban-ki Moon, said, “Today, no United Nations development effort—whether advocacy for a broad cause or support for specific goals—can make real headway without support of civil society.”

Former UN Secretary-Generals have also recognized the need of actively engaging with civil society. Secretary-General Kofi Annan (7th UN Secretary-General from 1997-2006) often applauded the many contributions of NGOs to the UN, referring to NGOs as partners in policy and in policy execution. “I see a United Nations keenly aware that if the global agenda is to be properly addressed, a partnership with civil society is not an option; it is a necessity,” he said. Mr. Annan also noted that the rise in NGO participation was the “best thing that has happened to our Organization in a long time.” Prior to Mr. Annan, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992-1996) acknowledged the vibrant role of civil society during the 1992 Earth Summit and at subsequent major conferences, and called for further integration of non-governmental organizations into the daily work of the United Nations (Guest Editorial, *Go Between* 53). For further information on the evolution of civil society engagement with the United Nations, see *Three Generations of UN-Civil Society Relations: A Quick Sketch* (Annex V).

### **Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations**

In 2003, the Secretary-General established a Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, chaired by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the former President of Brazil, to assess and draw lessons from the United Nations' interaction with civil society, and recommend ways to improve it. The Panel presented its report (commonly known as the "Cardoso report") in June 2004 (A/58/817), which contained 30 reform proposals that largely stem from four underlying priorities or principles that the Panel identified:

- The UN must become an outward looking Organization;
- The UN must embrace a plurality of constituencies—many actors may be relevant to an issue;
- The UN must connect the local with the global; and
- The UN must help re-shape democracy for the 21st century by emphasizing participatory democracy and deeper accountability of institutions to the global public.

The Secretary-General presented his response to that report in September 2004 to the General Assembly (A/59/354). While the General Assembly has not taken any formal action on the Cardoso report or the Secretary-General's response, it has, in the "spirit of Cardoso," held a number of informal interactive Hearings with representatives of non-governmental and civil society organizations and the private sector on a wide range of issues on the UN's agenda.

These reports and further information are available online at [www.un.org/reform/civilsociety/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/reform/civilsociety/index.shtml).

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Accreditation**

While Member States make the decisions at the UN, NGOs can contribute to and influence these processes in a variety of ways, even if they do not vote or act as negotiating partners. Participation may be ongoing and touch upon multiple issues and events, or it may be confined to a specific meeting. In either case, NGOs can choose to partake in a wide range of strategies: interacting with Member States and the institutional arms of the UN; monitoring agreements; briefing governments on the concerns of citizens; circulating information in and outside the UN; advocating positions at the national level; underscoring links between national actions and international commitments; organizing caucuses to strengthen advocacy work; forging connections between the UN and NGOs around the world; and drawing the attention of the media to the issues at hand.

Most forms of NGO participation in UN decision making start with applying for accreditation, the formal process that allows organizations

or groups to attend UN meetings. Depending on the meeting and the form of accreditation, NGOs may receive a grounds pass allowing entrance to UN facilities; access to documents; permission to attend formal sessions; the opportunity to deliver written and oral statements; meeting space for some kinds of NGO events; appropriate seating arrangements during public meetings; and the chance to interact with delegates, other NGOs and UN staff.

Accreditation is not an automatic privilege; organizations must meet certain criteria to obtain it and abide by certain guidelines to maintain it. Groups risk losing it when they fail to work within these parameters, or engage in conduct such as a politically motivated act against a Member State or the promotion of activities that violate the spirit of the UN Charter. Under no circumstances may NGOs use the UN logo, claim to represent the UN, receive diplomatic passports or tax exemptions, or consider themselves formally part of the UN system.

There are two basic forms of accreditation to the intergovernmental process: temporary for conference processes or ongoing, which is normally referred to as consultative status.

### **Temporary or conference accreditation**

For some major conferences or special sessions, Member States approve a process that enables NGOs to apply for a temporary accreditation to that conference process alone. The accreditation lasts only as long as the process itself. The application process generally requires the following documents: copies of the latest annual report and most recent budget; copies of constitution by-laws and information on governing body composition; proof of non-profit status; a short statement of how the group's activities relate to the meeting; and a description of membership and the location of headquarters.

Deadlines and guidelines for temporary accreditation vary by conference or event, and groups should request information from the meeting's Secretariat far in advance. For world conferences, for example, NGOs must often be accredited to one of the Preparatory Committee meetings in order to gain registration for the final event. Such criteria are determined by the UN resolution on the conference rules, which include those for access of and the participation for NGOs and other non-governmental actors and groups. The Secretariat reviews applications for accreditation in light of their conformity with the resolution and then forwards lists of those who meet the criteria for final approval by governments. To be eligible, NGOs usually have to show relevance and competence in the subject under discussion. NGOs that receive accreditation for conferences and special sessions are obliged to register upon arrival at each preparatory meeting as well as at the conference itself.

### **Consultative status or ongoing accreditation**

NGOs that are seeking a regular presence at the UN, or a more permanent relationship, can apply for ongoing status or consultative status with ECOSOC or one of the programmes, funds or autonomous specialized agencies.

**ECOSOC:** NGOs requesting affiliation with ECOSOC must prove that they are active on economic and social issues related to the Council's mandate. This form of accreditation, based on Article 71 of the UN Charter, is the foundation on which UN-NGO relations have been built, allowing access to all formal, routinely scheduled ECOSOC sessions. Organizations and groups with consultative status are usually invited to attend special UN meetings such as world conferences without having to submit to the approval process for accreditation. However, they are required to complete any registration or pre-registration conditions/requirements.

There are three categories of ECOSOC consultative status for NGOs: general, special and roster. General category NGOs are concerned with most of the activities of ECOSOC and its subsidiary organs. These groups tend to be fairly large and have members in many countries and in different regions. They may attend all meetings of ECOSOC and its subsidiaries, as well as speak before delegates, circulate statements and place items on the agenda. Every four years, they must submit quadrennial reports on their contributions to the work and goals of the UN.

Special category NGOs offer expertise on a few ECOSOC-related subjects. Like the general category organizations, they must provide quadrennial reports. They receive many of the same privileges, except they cannot place items on the agenda and their written statements are limited to 500 words, compared with 2,000 words for the general category organizations.

Roster category NGOs are those organizations that may make occasional contributions to ECOSOC's work and provide a specific technical perspective; many also enjoy consultative status with one of the UN's specialized agencies. They may attend meetings, but cannot speak or circulate statements. These groups are not obliged to submit quadrennial reports.

Obtaining ECOSOC consultative status involves writing a letter of intent to the NGO Section of the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which then sends out an application package, including a questionnaire and additional background information. Completed applications and supporting documentation must be received by June 1 of the year before the NGO wants to be considered by ECOSOC's 19-Member State NGO Committee. The Committee meets twice annually to discuss applications, with recommendations for approval forwarded to ECOSOC.

Requirements for obtaining consultative status:

- The activities of the applying NGO must be relevant to the Economic and Social Council;
- The NGO must have a democratic decision-making mechanism;
- The NGO must have officially registered existence for at least two years;
- The primary source of NGO funding must come from contributions by national affiliates, individual members or NGOs.

### **Funds, programmes and autonomous specialized agencies:**

NGOs focusing on a specific subject may seek some form of consultative status with one of the UN's funds, programmes or the autonomous specialized agencies. These relationships vary considerably, from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, who cooperate closely with and consider NGOs integral to their work on a variety of fronts, to the

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### **A Recent Review: ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31**

In the mid-1990s, for the third time in UN history, ECOSOC reviewed its guidelines for NGO participation. The Council appointed an Open-Ended Working Group, which met over the course of nearly three years to consider amendments to the rules (a move first called for by NGOs at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio).

The result was ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, which standardized arrangements for accrediting NGOs to UN conferences, streamlined the process of applying for ECOSOC consultative status, and opened the application process to national, subregional and regional NGOs. It offered a right of redress for NGOs who are refused ECOSOC accreditation or who lose their consultative status. It also drew a clear distinction between NGOs and Member States, noting that arrangements for consultation do not accord to NGOs the same rights of participation as member governments. ECOSOC has also encouraged all economic and social bodies in the UN system to review their procedures for NGO participation against the Council's standards. In particular, the Council recommended that the General Assembly begin examining the role of NGOs in all areas of the UN.

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International Monetary Fund, which has no formal system of relations with NGOs. NGOs affiliated with the funds and programmes may be able to participate in sessions of the Executive Boards. They may be called upon to address the board, but they do not have any formal role in decision making. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is guided by a Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) which serves as its governing body. The Board includes representatives of 22 governments from all regions of the world, the ten UNAIDS Cosponsors, and five non-governmental organizations, including associations of people living with HIV/AIDS. They have formal terms of reference, can serve for up to three years and have non-voting status. UNAIDS is the first United Nations programme to include NGOs in its governing body.

In the case of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is completely outside of the UN system, at this point in time there is no formal accreditation procedure other than for its ministerial meetings, which are held every other year.

**DESA NGO Section:** DESA's NGO section acts as the substantive secretariat of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs. It also acts as a focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for all matters related to the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs. It maintains a website [www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo) and provides regular mailings of UN information materials.

**Department of Public Information (DPI):** Another avenue for access to the UN is through the NGO Section of the DPI. A central criteria for association is that the NGO possess an information and communications programme capable of providing and disseminating news and information about the United Nations in its thematic area of work. For the over 1,662 NGOs associated with DPI, as well as for those in consultative status with ECOSOC, the NGO Section conducts an extensive information programme that includes, on an annual basis, 30 briefings, three communications workshops, a two-day orientation programme for new NGO representatives, and the annual three-day DPI/NGO Conference, the premier NGO event at UN Headquarters in New York each year.

The NGO Section provides up to three grounds passes for NGO representatives who wish access to the Secretariat building in New York. It operates the DPI/NGO Resource Centre at UN Headquarters where associated NGO representatives can meet and work. It maintains a website *www.un.org/dpi/ngosection*, and provides access to official UN documents system-wide, regular monthly mailings of UN information materials and a monthly calendar of events. The Section publishes a Directory of NGOs associated with DPI every two years. The electronic version of the Directory is available on the NGO Section website. DPI NGOs elect an 18-member Executive Committee that works closely with the Department on events and programmes, including the annual DPI/NGO Conference.

**United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS):** While NGLS has no formal responsibilities in the UN's accreditation system, many of its activities support the participation of NGOs in UN deliberations. For example, NGLS brings sustainable development, human rights, including women's rights, peace and disarmament, and other issues being addressed by the UN to the attention of

NGOs through its publications, information outreach and communications programme. NGLS publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, entitled the *Go Between*, which covers a range of UN activities, areas of cooperation between the UN and NGOs, and other news. NGLS *Roundups* provide in-depth focus on a particular issue or UN process. NGLS produces a bi-monthly e-bulletin, the *Civil Society Observer*, which pulls together information on, about or by civil society and NGOs; information on civil society in the press; academic literature; and other sources including NGOs and CSOs themselves. NGLS also produces a number of *Guides*, *Handbooks* and *Directories* on the UN system targeted to the NGO community and others wishing to constructively engage with the United Nations. More recently, NGLS has published a Compendium on *UN System Engagement with NGOs, Civil Society, the Private Sector, and Other Actors* (2005), *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations* (2007), and *UN/Civil Society Engagement: Year in Review 2006* (2007). These and other NGLS publications can be found online [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org) and are also available in hard copy.

In addition to its outreach and publications work, NGLS also organizes and supports different types of meetings and consultations involving the UN system and NGOs. In the past fifteen years, NGLS has enabled over 6,000 developing country NGOs to participate in UN conference processes. NGLS's current work priorities include the Millennium Development Goals, UN reform, supporting the work of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN System-wide Coherence in the field of humanitarian assistance, development and environment (in the form of online consultations, briefings and other events), discussions around NGO accountability, the preparatory process for the 2008 review of the Financing for Development agenda, the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, among others. NGLS also supported and facilitated the NGO/Civil Society dimension of

preparations for the series of High-level Meetings and Dialogues and the three Informal Interactive Hearings convened by the General Assembly in 2006 on HIV/AIDS; International Migration and Development; and review of the Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries adopted at the Brussels Conference in 2001. NGLS is expanding its efforts to reach a wider audience and is translating some of its key publications into both French and Spanish. Efforts are also being made to provide a French and Spanish version of the NGLS website.



# Chapter 2

## Preparing for a Meeting

For NGOs already accredited or who have started the application process, the next step towards constructive and effective participation in a meeting is developing an advocacy strategy and making logistical arrangements. The bottom line: the more prepared the NGO is, the more effective their work will be.

**Be Targeted and Informed:** It is important to begin by defining what is to be achieved at the meeting—subsequent activities can be tailored to meet these goals. Research the meeting by gathering documentation that is available in advance. Such documentation may include previously negotiated resolutions, government statements, and questionnaires sent by the UN to governments to solicit their views. Many UN materials can be found on the Internet, and others can be obtained by being placed on the mailing list of the meeting's Secretariat. Reading these documents carefully will shed insight into the international dimensions of the issue and reveal the positions being taken on the issues of concern. It can also increase awareness of the many different points of view, providing information which could be useful in

the strategic positioning of advocacy efforts. If some subjects are found to be missing, create a list of those that should be proposed for inclusion. It is important to establish priorities for objectives, issues, activities and resources, and to understand, generally speaking, that not everything will be achieved.

**Reach Out:** Preparations could also include making contact with other NGOs working within the specific country or region or on the international level. Some international NGOs have extensive experience working with the UN, and may be willing to share advice and support with those who are new to the field. The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) monitors issues of NGO participation and access to the UN and works to facilitate NGO participation. Ask other NGOs about their goals and priorities, and see if there are points of common ground. Collaborative preparations often generate political momentum, attract public interest and avoid unnecessary duplication of work. Networking and information-sharing in general can maximize both impact and resources, particularly on the national level, when many NGOs do not have the resources or capacity to participate physically in international meetings. In some cases, organizations pool funds to send one person to the meeting to represent all of them.

Well in advance, begin finding out who will attend the meeting from the home government. Since UN negotiations often start many months and even years before the final meeting, making contact with the appropriate officials, both within the diplomatic team and at the national level, can be an opportunity to begin learning about how the government is positioning itself on different issues, how open it is to altering these positions, and whether it is willing to consider incorporating any NGO proposals. Government delegates may be a mix of mission staff based at UN Headquarters in New York or Geneva, plus

officials from one or more ministries in the capital. Some delegations include NGO members as well, although they are not usually entitled to speak on behalf of the government.

Draw up a list of news media and individual journalists that can receive press releases and other materials before and during the meeting. Start by contacting relevant journalists, alerting them to one or two key issues at the meeting, and keep them updated through press releases. Look at other publications in terms of the audiences they reach, and whether they have covered the meeting's issues in the past. Identify journalists who have covered similar stories; make contact to inform them of the meeting; and put them on a distribution list for press releases.

Finally, establish links with UN staff at the Secretariat who are responsible for liaising with NGOs. Another useful step would be to identify Secretariat staff who are writing reports on substantive issues and enquire how to contribute relevant information. The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) in Geneva and New York tracks many meetings and can provide information or answer questions about preparations. The NGLS website [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org) also provides a number of relevant documents and publications, as well as links to the UN system and NGO liaison offices.

**Be Prepared:** Once the background research on the meeting has been carried out, it may be beneficial to make contact with other participants. The next step towards preparation would be to draft position papers. These are best limited to a couple of pages at most, with a clear statement of proposals for actions to be taken by governments and the UN system. Send the position papers in advance to government officials, the meeting's Secretariat and other NGOs. Provide them as well to relevant journalists, suggesting that they write a story

in advance of the meeting. This spreads public awareness and can strengthen support on certain issues.

From a strategic perspective, it is important to determine not only how many representatives can attend the meeting, but who is the best prepared. Aside from issue expertise, a variety of other skills may be required, such as lobbying delegates, organizing NGO caucuses, writing and delivering speeches, and working effectively with the media. It is also important to consider sending representatives to preparatory meetings that are held normally in the year or more before a major world conference, as many negotiations are well on their way to being concluded during the preparatory process for the final event. Inter-sessional meetings and activities organized by governments are also important parts of the preparatory process and should not be missed.

Those who attend the meeting may want to arrive at least a day or two in advance, as many NGO preparatory events take place in the days before the meeting opens. Likewise, they may want to stay at least a day after the meeting is scheduled to end, as negotiations often run past the official deadline.

Large-scale international meetings, such as UN world conferences and summits, may also be accompanied by an independent NGO Forum, which usually starts a few days in advance of the intergovernmental meeting. Forums include workshops, panel discussions, displays, demonstrations and other activities organized by advocates from around the world. Some form of national NGO organizing and host committee oversees these gatherings; information is usually available from the conference Secretariat on a wide range of subjects, including whom to contact in order to hold an event, meeting logistics, or for other purposes.

**What to Bring:** Bring a copy of all correspondence concerning accreditation. The UN Secretariat often sends a letter identifying the participant as an official representative of the organization. Presentation of this letter will be required, as well as a passport or some other form of official photo identification for the issuing of a grounds pass.

Bring copies of position papers, in multiple UN languages if possible; materials about the organization; business cards; extra letterhead; and other office supplies that may be needed. Bringing electronic equipment—such as a mobile phone or portable laptop and printer—may also prove to be useful. While computer and Internet facilities are generally available at UN conferences, there are usually long waiting lines to use them, or they may be off-limits after certain hours.



# Chapter 3

## Follow-up and Implementation

At every major UN meeting, there are set groups of key participants: governments, the Secretariat, UN agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, the private sector and the media. Participation is governed by strict rules that cover everything from who may attend the meeting to the order of speakers. Understanding this protocol is every bit as important as knowledge of the substantive issues. It is important to stress here that not understanding these rules leads quickly to frustration and can impair efforts. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Following protocol allows for a more effective focus on working with governments, collaborating with other NGOs, and exploring the many other opportunities for advancing concerns on the issues. Resolution 1996/31 defines the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs, and urges them "to make positive contributions to the work of the UN."

**How to Approach Governments:** By far, the most important players in UN decision making are the governments. The ability of NGOs to

influence an outcome agreement depends on identifying governments who are sympathetic to their views and willing to work collaboratively. However, it may also be useful to interact with governments who have a differing point of view. As negotiations proceed and particularly as they draw to a close, some positions may be withdrawn or exchanged for concessions in other areas. Viewing the overall picture can prove helpful in thinking about how to advance the relevant issues, whether this could mean holding a press briefing, delivering a speech, or a number of other activities.

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**Seeking Access? Whom to Consult:**

While NGOs may not be formally permitted to attend informal sessions of negotiations between governments, they may still be able to observe. In the past, NGOs have been able to gain access through a sympathetic chair, either by approaching him or her directly or through the Secretariat. Another alternative is to work with governments who may be willing to bring the question up with the meeting's Bureau. Final approval must come from the group of delegates at large.

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It is also important to have a clear idea of which subjects are so politically sensitive or intractable that the potential for impact may be low. In addition, passages of text that have already been agreed in earlier negotiations are only rarely re-opened. Advocacy efforts should be devoted to the subjects that governments are still negotiating.

With these general guidelines in mind, the first step in working with governments is knowing when and where it is appropriate to approach them. Not all meetings are automatically accessible to NGOs, even to sit in as observers. UN security guards or Secretariat staff members will ask uninvited persons to leave the meeting.

Much of the interaction between governments and NGOs takes place immediately before or after a negotiating session, when delegates are free to talk and tend to mingle on the floor of the negotiating room. In

order to distinguish who is from which government, delegates sit behind their country nameplates during the session. Social functions, such as receptions and lunches, provide other chances for informal discussion. Some delegates may also be willing to present national, regional or negotiating group priorities at special NGO briefings or NGO caucus meetings. All of these forms of exchange can be opportunities to build relationships that can later be transformed into a delegation's willingness to review a position paper or consider suggestions for negotiating the language of the outcome document.

The second step in working with delegations is knowing who to approach. Experts from ministries or capitals are more likely to have a substantive understanding of the issues than professional diplomats based at the UN. On the other hand, these diplomats may have a better understanding of how to manage the political currents and UN procedures in their favour. Individual personalities, preferences and styles can sometimes make a big difference to the course of negotiations. Contact can also be made with other NGOs who sometimes serve on delegations.

Finally, the third step is understanding how to approach governments. Most likely there will not be time for a long, complicated discussion. Therefore it is critical to know the most important priority issue in advance, and focus the message clearly and concisely to support it. Written information about the topic or the organization may be useful, but keep in mind that most delegates will be negotiating all day and attending diplomatic functions in the evening, in addition to writing reports and having to read through the stacks of documents produced by the UN Secretariat itself. The more accessible the information presented is, the more chances there are of it being paid attention to or used.

These same rules apply to submitting suggestions for language and for writing speeches. Offering a language proposal requires tracking the negotiations closely and knowing what the different positions are and who is supporting what. UN language is extremely subtle and highly legalistic; a comma can make a political difference. Delegates must function within these parameters, and so are more likely to accept an NGO proposal if it abides by the same terms. Understand also that progress in adopting language is incremental and based on precedent, and that delegates may go over a passage many times before its final adoption. A radically rewritten suggestion will most likely not be taken seriously.

Before approaching a potentially sympathetic delegate:

- be aware of what language has been previously agreed at the UN on the subject at hand;
- know what has already been discussed at this meeting on the issue;
- incorporate this knowledge in language that follows UN style.

Present a clean copy of the existing text with the amendments clearly underlined or marked in bold. If a delegate does accept the proposal, be sure to express appreciation, and be aware that the contribution will not be publicly acknowledged.

There is more scope to address priorities in written speeches for delivery during open or formal sessions, when NGOs are allowed to speak to all assembled governments. Still, it is important to target the message. Delegates may have already listened to hours of speeches, as NGOs generally speak last. Come up with no more than three key points. State them clearly and concisely, and support them with facts, figures or anecdotes that will grab attention. Make concrete proposals for action that are linked to specific subjects currently being negotiated. Time limits are usually given—find out what this is from the

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**Decoding Language: the Power of Verbs**

Thriving in the UN requires not just political skill, but also a finely tuned understanding of the nuances and balance of language. Not all negotiated UN documents are legally binding, but delegates are schooled in containing anything that might later prove politically problematic.

They look at language from several perspectives. One is the position of a word or sentence within the document as a whole. Text appearing in an operative paragraph, which requires action, has a different weight than text in a preambular paragraph, which is meant to provide mainly background information.

A common point of contention is over the choice of a verb—one of the most powerful parts of speech. Verbs determine different levels of commitment to an issue or action, and when delegates disagree with a proposal but sense they won't be able to eliminate it, they often counter by watering down the verbs. Such verbs include: endorse, decide, welcome, call upon, invite, encourage, recognize, acknowledge, reaffirm, express concern, take note with appreciation, and take note. Perhaps almost as important as verbs are adverbs. The use of “as appropriate” can strip a sentence or clause of any meaning or importance.

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Secretariat, and then contribute to goodwill by abiding by them. Deliver the speech slowly so that the interpreters can keep up.

Combining efforts with other NGOs to prepare a joint speech, which can be a statement of strength and solidarity, may mean that the speech will be taken more seriously by governments. However, state clearly which NGO(s) are being represented. Have copies of the speech and make them available to delegates, the Secretariat, interpreters, the media and other NGOs.

**Working with the Secretariat:** The UN Secretariat prepares reports on the issues for consideration and provides guidance to delegates on protocol and rules of procedure; provides information on previous agreements and legal issues; handles accreditation; and makes

**Security: Following the Rules**

As a high-profile political organization, the UN must take a variety of security precautions. Since 2001, security regulations have become even stricter. How rigorously they are applied depends to some extent on who is in the building. Heads of State or a large number of high-level officials are reasons for the security system to shift into high gear.

Respecting decisions made by security personnel is part of working at the UN. Don't expect security guards to exercise latitude. Holding demonstrations on UN premises, arguing vehemently with guards or using someone else's identification badge are all reasons for being barred future entry. While a demonstration may achieve short-term publicity, being asked to leave the meeting can prevent the realization of longer-term goals.

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logistical arrangements, including setting up facilities for NGOs, briefings with delegations and press conferences. Establishing contact with the Secretariat staff responsible for working with NGOs helps ensure these processes work smoothly. They can also be an important source of information. In advance of a meeting, identify Secretariat staff who are writing reports on substantive issues and enquire about how to submit useful and relevant information.

**Building Momentum with Other NGOs:** Working with other NGOs can be one of the most important strategies for influencing an international or regional UN meeting. Even NGOs who disagree about some priorities may find areas where they can work together. Sometimes this may provide a way to ensure all the work gets done; in other cases it allows groups to learn from each other. Often there is an NGO room where organizations can gather documents and share information. They can also hold meetings, although these cannot be closed if they take place in UN facilities.

Methods for working together vary across meetings, are regularly and creatively modified, and are completely optional. However, some common joint strategies include:

**Organize a daily briefing:** This usually takes place either first thing in the morning, at the end of the day, or at both times. It allows NGOs to share perspectives, exchange information on government positions and coordinate advocacy efforts. If no daily briefing has been scheduled, NGOs might find it useful to speak with other NGOs.

**Create a caucus:** Caucuses can be a highly effective way for like-minded advocates who have similar priorities to work together around issues, by region or by constituency. Building a team allows the members to follow multiple meetings, pool different forms of expertise, and devise common strategies. Caucuses often carry enough weight to be able to deliver a statement or call for a briefing by delegations closely connected to their subjects. These briefings provide a chance to interact with delegates and also hear the delegation's perspectives on the course of the negotiations. Country or regional caucuses can work together to provide proposals to their government delegations.

**Form a monitoring team:** It is labour intensive to track all facets of government negotiations, yet this can be critical to understanding how they are progressing, and which elements are being traded towards consensus. Sometimes, delegates break into two or more working groups that meet all day and late into the evening. A team of NGO monitors ensures that everything can be followed. Team members can then report back to other NGOs at a daily briefing or within a caucus.

**Produce information resources:** A daily newspaper or newsletter on the meeting that is lively, covers a variety of events and offers differ-

ent points of view attracts the attention of participants at all levels. It can also be beneficial to produce and distribute brief information sheets on particular issues, perhaps presenting some key perspectives and statistics. Find out from the meeting Secretariat what the procedures are for making NGO documents available. There are usually specific tables and racks identified for this purpose.

**Work with the Press:** Journalists from national and internationally circulated newspapers, magazines, televisions, radio stations and Internet publications, both mainstream and alternative, cover major UN meetings. Media advocacy can be a useful strategy for mobilizing public support on the positions.

The UN Department of Public Information (DPI) is responsible for managing and coordinating the UN relationship with the press. It organizes a press room, holds daily briefings, distributes press releases and sponsors press conferences. NGOs can work with the Secretariat and DPI to hold press conferences featuring NGO speakers.

Always keep in mind that journalists at the UN will rarely come looking for a story; instead go to them using contacts established before the meeting started. Otherwise, seek out journalists from publications at home or with journalists that share interest in the same issues. Try to think of one or two “angles” in advance. Good examples could be emerging issues that haven’t been covered extensively in the past, or a newsworthy breakthrough in the negotiations on the issue being covered. Being able to provide an informed point of view on such issues can generate interest and raise awareness. Prepare a few facts and figures that will help convince journalists they can find a solid story. Don’t offer long documents or large quantities of information: most journalists don’t have time to sift through it. Many journalists

must file their stories by the end of the day. Old news cannot be used the following morning, so the earlier the information is submitted, the greater the likelihood it may be used. In some cases, momentum could also be built from the UN's press releases as journalists are always seeking multiple perspectives. They may welcome a timely phone call or a short e-mail message with a colourful quote.

### **Arenas for Activism**

In the past, NGOs have been particularly active in a handful of UN decision-making processes. These include:

**Conferences:** NGOs wielded considerable influence throughout the cycle of large world conferences that took place during the 1990s, starting with the 1990 World Summit for Children. Tens of thousands of organizations attended the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development, the 1996 Habitat II conference on housing and urban development, and the 1996 World Food Summit. An even wider spectrum of NGOs than ever before participated, including large numbers of national groups. Many saw these events primarily as opportunities for networking on an unprecedented global scale. They exchanged experiences, articulated new and unconventional ideas, and held colourful events that drew international media attention.

However, many NGOs also began to recognize more clearly the need to work with the formal intergovernmental process. The UN itself, starting with the 1992 Rio conference on environment and development, encouraged this trend. A record number of NGOs attended consultative, preparatory and conference processes, and events and fora. At the 1994 International Conference on Population and

Development a well-prepared women's caucus, organized by leading women's groups, helped to shift the international population debate from centering on population control to underscoring the empowerment of women as essential to balancing population and development.

The International Conference on Financing for Development process, which began in 1998 and culminated in a world conference in 2002, encouraged new forms of participation by groups outside the United Nations. The conference preparations relied heavily on input from NGOs and business representatives, who attended a series of hearings and gave presentations that were incorporated into the intergovernmental discussions. In the lead-up to the International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha (Qatar) in the second half of 2008 (A/RES/61/191), active civil society participation is once again strongly encouraged.

**ECOSOC:** Among all the regularly scheduled UN discussions, NGOs are most active in ECOSOC and some of the ECOSOC commission meetings, where they find the widest latitude for participation. Some commissions, like the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), consider NGOs as an integral part of their process and have pioneered innovative formats such as multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions. NGOs themselves often view the commissions as connected most closely to their advocacy issues—at least in the social, economic and rights spheres. For the first time at the annual Session of Economic and Social Council, in 2001, an NGO Forum was organized prior, but linked, to the high-level segment in order for NGOs to be able to express their key recommendations. Those accredited to ECOSOC under the general status category may even propose new agenda items, a privilege reserved elsewhere for governments. In addition, language agreed in the commissions may later be

approved without debate in the General Assembly, thus receiving high-level endorsement.

An insistence on focusing exclusively on the commissions, however, does not recognize that commissions carry less political gravitas in the UN system than either ECOSOC or the General Assembly. Many issues originate in ECOSOC or the General Assembly that are not taken up elsewhere, including in the commissions. As well, not all agreements struck within the commissions are endorsed at higher levels.

**New Forms of Participation:** In recent years, the UN has begun to explore the possible benefits of new forms of participatory decision making, including multi-stakeholder dialogues, civil society hearings and roundtables between Heads of State and civil society. These are designed to bring together people who are involved with a particular issue to exchange perspectives and experiences. In general, the different mechanisms aim to promote better decision making through wider input, integrate diverse viewpoints; develop trust and partnership; and mobilize commitment to implementation of decisions.

This new approach has generated substantial interest. Aside from the annual meeting of the CSD, other processes that have incorporated new forms of participation include the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. More recently, beginning in June 2005, the General Assembly has convened a series of informal, interactive hearings with NGOs, civil, society and other actors to provide them with an opportunity to submit their views and concerns, share best practices, and dialogue with Member States in the lead-up to high-level meetings on a range of subjects. Three General Assembly hearings took place in 2006 on HIV/AIDS; international migration and devel-

opment; and least-developed countries (LDCs). The Security Council has also increased its Arria Formula meetings on specific topics, which often include NGOs, on topics such as women, peace and security; children and armed conflict; the role of civil society in post-conflict peacebuilding; and humanitarian situations in certain countries.

### **Away from the Meeting**

**Local, National and Regional Work:** Not all NGOs can attend a UN meeting, but they can do a great deal of important work without being physically present. In fact, work on the international level counts for little without support at the regional, national and local levels. Long before the meeting begins, for example, national NGOs can make contact with other civil society organizations and speak with government officials who are preparing national positions. They may be able to make suggestions on policies, provide inputs to country reports and urge that the delegation include an NGO representative.

NGOs may also mobilize awareness among the general public through the press or other kinds of education campaigns. They can work with parliamentarians, who can call for discussions on government policies or preparations for the meetings. They can gather together to achieve greater influence in advocating certain issues, attend regional preparatory meetings and compile alternative local, national and regional reports. Finally, they can still monitor the progress and outcome of the meeting through documents and press releases available on the UN website, through connections with delegates, or through links with other national or international NGOs who have been able to attend.

**Monitoring and Implementing Decisions:** UN agreements are only the first step in the process of achieving the aims that they express.

Their central importance lies in follow-up at the national level. Many agreements contain references to establishing follow-up mechanisms, methods of evaluating implementation and sources of funding. It is primarily the responsibility of national governments and international organizations to use these tools to transform commitments and obligations into reality.

However, NGOs can also play a role in carrying decisions forward after a meeting has concluded, mainly through monitoring and encouraging national governments and international agencies to act on their promises. Start this process by obtaining an official copy of the final agreement, either on the Internet or by contacting the Secretariat. The next step would be to identify the relevant governmental departments responsible for implementation, or continue working with official contacts that have been made during the course of the meeting. Contact should be maintained as well with regional and international NGO networks to exchange information on strategies and practices for ensuring accountability. Finally, one might consider organizing a meeting within a few months after the UN session where an action plan and set of commitments to follow-up can be developed. Invite relevant actors—including government representatives, other NGOs, the media, academics, private sector representatives, donors and UN organizations—to brainstorm on next steps.



# **Annexes**



# **Annex I**

## **NGO Focal Points of the United Nations**

The main UN website *www.un.org* provides an extensive range of information on peace and security, economic and social development, human rights, humanitarian affairs and international law. It also provides information on the Secretary-General, Member States, issues on the UN agenda, conferences and events, civil society and business, among many other topics.

Most UN organs have offices and officers responsible for liaison with NGOs, civil society and the private sector. Contact information on some of these offices is provided below, in alphabetical order.

**Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA)**

[www.un.org/Depts/dda](http://www.un.org/Depts/dda)

NGO Liaison Office

Mr. Gary De Rosa

Room S-3151F, United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 3980

fax +1-212/963 1121

email: [derosa@un.org](mailto:derosa@un.org)

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**

[www.un.org/esa/](http://www.un.org/esa/)

NGO Section

Ms. Hanifa Dahela Mezoui, Chief

Room DC1-1480, United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 8652

fax +1-212/963 9248

email: [desangosection@un.org](mailto:desangosection@un.org)

website: [www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo)

Social Development

Mr. Yao N’Goran

Division for Social Policy and Development

Room DC2-1360, United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 3175

fax +1-212/963 3062

email: [ngoran@un.org](mailto:ngoran@un.org)

website: [www.un.org/esa/socdev](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev)

Division for the Advancement of Women  
Ms. Tsu-Wei Chang  
Coordination and Outreach Unit  
Room DC2-1274  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 8370  
fax +1-212/963 3463  
email: [changt@un.org](mailto:changt@un.org)  
website: [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

Division for Sustainable Development  
Ms. Federica Pietracci  
Major Groups Coordinator  
Room DC2-2262, United Nations  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 8497  
fax +1-212/963 0443  
email: [pietracci@un.org](mailto:pietracci@un.org)  
website: [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html)

Financing for Development Office (FFD)  
Mr. Daniel Platz, NGO Liaison  
Room DC2-2386, United Nations  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 2587  
fax +1-212/963 0443  
email: [platz@un.org](mailto:platz@un.org)  
website: [www.un.org/esa/ffd](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd)

**Population Division****Ms. Hania Zlotnik, Director****Room DC2-19050, United Nations****New York NY 10017, United States****telephone +1-212/963 3179****fax +1-212/963 2147****email: [zlotnik@un.org](mailto:zlotnik@un.org)****website: [www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm)****Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues****Ms. Elsa Stamatopoulou-Robbins, Director of Secretariat****Room DC2-1772, United Nations****New York NY 10017, United States****telephone +1-917/367 5100****email: [indigenouspermanentforum@un.org](mailto:indigenouspermanentforum@un.org)****website: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/index.html)****United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)****Ms. Ghazal Badiozamani, Focal Point Major Groups****Room DC1-1245****New York NY 10017, United States****telephone +1-212/963 3160****fax +1-917/367 3186****email: [badiozamani@un.org](mailto:badiozamani@un.org)****website: [www.un.org/esa/forests](http://www.un.org/esa/forests)**

**Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference  
Services (DGAACS)**

[www.un.org/Depts/DGAACS](http://www.un.org/Depts/DGAACS)

Mr. Sergei Cherniavksy  
Political Affairs Officer  
Room S-2977D, United Nations  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 3051  
fax +1-212/963 5305

**Department of Political Affairs (DPA)**

[www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal](http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal)

Focal Point for NGOs  
Ms. Elizabeth Cabal  
United Nations  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 1800  
email: [cabal@un.org](mailto:cabal@un.org)

Division for Palestinian Rights  
Mr. Wolfgang Grieger  
NGO Liaison Office  
Room S-3350I, United Nations  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 1550  
fax +1-212/963 4199  
email: [grieger@un.org](mailto:grieger@un.org)  
website: [www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ngo](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ngo)

**Department of Public Information (DPI)**

[www.un.org/dpi/ngosection](http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection)

DPI/NGO Section

Mr. Juan Carlos Brandt, Chief

Room S-1070L, United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 8070

fax +1-212/963 6914

email: [brandt@un.org](mailto:brandt@un.org)

NGO Resource Centre

Room L-1B-31, United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 7234/7078

fax +1-212/963 2819

**Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)**

[www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/home.shtml)

Peace and Security Section

Public Affairs Division

Department of Public Information

United Nations

New York NY 10017, United States

telephone +1-212/963 6840

fax +1-212/963 9737

**United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP)**

[www.un.org/unfip](http://www.un.org/unfip)

Ms. Gawaher Atif  
Chief of Office/Secretary of the Advisory Board  
Room DC1-1300  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-212/963 1000  
fax +1-212/963 1486  
email: [unfip@un.org](mailto:unfip@un.org)

**United Nations Global Compact Office**

Ms. Olajobi Makinwa, Civil Society Coordinator  
Room S-1881  
New York NY 10017, United States  
telephone +1-917/367 3423  
fax +1-212/963 1207  
email: [makinwa@un.org](mailto:makinwa@un.org)  
website: [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

**International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR)**

[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

Mr. Michele Cocchiglia  
Secretariat for the ISDR  
Chemin de Balexert, 7-9  
CH-1219 Geneva, Switzerland  
telephone +41-22/917 8840  
fax +41-22/917 8983  
email: [cocchiglia@un.org](mailto:cocchiglia@un.org)

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**

<http://ochaonline.un.org>, [www.reliefweb.inf](http://www.reliefweb.inf)

Ms. Madeleine Moulin-Acevedo  
Advocacy and External Relations Officer  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
telephone +41-22/917 3160  
fax +41-22/917 0023  
email: [ochagva@un.org](mailto:ochagva@un.org)

**United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)**

[www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch)

Mr. Ricardo Espinosa  
NGO Liaison Officer  
Palais des Nations, Room 155  
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland  
telephone +41-22/917 2127  
fax +41-22/917 0583  
email: [respinosa@unog.ch](mailto:respinosa@unog.ch)

**United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)**

[www.unon.org](http://www.unon.org)

PO Box 67578  
Nairobi 00200, Kenya  
telephone +254-20/621234

**United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)**

[www.unvienna.org](http://www.unvienna.org)

Mr. Boris Znamenski  
Chief, Protocol and NGO Liaison  
Vienna International Centre, Room E1415  
Wagramerstrasse 5  
A-1400 Vienna, Austria  
telephone +43-1/26060, extension 4090  
fax +43-1/26060 5929  
email: [boris.znamenski@unvienna.org](mailto:boris.znamenski@unvienna.org)

# **United Nations Agencies, Programmes and Funds, and Specialized Agencies**

## **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

Mr. Thomas Price  
Senior Programme Officer  
Resources and Strategic Partnerships Unit (TCDS)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
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**International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD)**

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**International Labour Office (ILO)**

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**International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

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**World Trade Organization (WTO)**

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# United Nations Environment Conventions

## **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

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## **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)**

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**Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of  
Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

[www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

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**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
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# United Nations Regional Commissions

## **Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)**

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**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia  
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# Annex II

## Institutional Resources

**United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS):** NGLS is mandated to support the organizations of the UN in developing their relations with NGOs and also to support the constructive engagement of NGOs in the work and governance of the UN system by providing information, advice, expertise and support services. NGLS's work is concerned with the entire UN development, human rights and disarmament agendas. NGLS's current work priorities include the Millennium Development Goals, follow-up and implementation of the UN world conferences, UN reform, ensuring NGO engagement in the work and follow up of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN System-wide Coherence in the field of humanitarian assistance, development and environment (in the form of online consultations, briefings and other events), discussions around NGO accountability, the preparatory process for the 2008 review of the Financing for Development agenda, the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, among others.

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**Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA):** DESA's NGO Section acts as the substantive secretariat of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs. It also acts as a focal point within the United Nations Secretariat for all matters related to the consultative relationship between the United Nations and NGOs. As of August 2006, there were 2,869 Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC in three different categories: General, Special and Roster.

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**Department of Public Information (DPI):** DPI's NGO Section provides information to NGOs, including briefings with UN officials. It also organizes an annual conference for NGOs on a major UN theme, and offers orientation courses, workshops and seminars. The NGO Resource Centre provides documents, press releases, reports and a video lending library.

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**The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO):** is an independent, international, not-for-profit membership association of NGOs that facilitates the participation of NGOs in United Nations debates and decisions. CONGO is most active in the major UN centers of New York, Geneva, and Vienna, but extends its work to all regions of the world.

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**World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA):**  
WFUNA's objective is to inform, sustain and energize a global network of United Nations Associations to support the principles and programmes of the United Nations and to help shape its agenda.

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# **Annex III**

## **Excerpt from ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 on Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations**

### **PART I**

#### **PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS**

The following principles shall be applied in establishing consultative relations with non-governmental organizations:

1. The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.
2. The aims and purposes of the organization shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The organization shall undertake to support the work of the United Nations and to promote knowledge of its principles and activities, in accordance with its own aims and purposes and the nature and scope of its competence and activities.
4. Except where expressly stated otherwise, the term “organization” shall refer to non-governmental organizations at the national, subregional, regional or international levels.
5. Consultative relationships may be established with international, regional, subregional and national organizations, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and criteria established under the present resolution. The Committee, in considering applications for consultative status, should ensure, to the extent possible, participation of non-governmental organizations from all regions, and particularly from developing countries, in order to help achieve a just, balanced, effective and genuine involvement of non-governmental organizations from all regions and areas of the world. The Committee shall also pay particular attention to non-governmental organizations that have special expertise or experience upon which the Council may wish to draw.
6. Greater participation of non-governmental organizations from developing countries in international conferences convened by the United Nations should be encouraged.
7. Greater involvement of non-governmental organizations from countries with economies in transition should be encouraged.
8. Regional, subregional and national organizations, including those affiliated to an international organization already in status, may be admitted provided that they can demonstrate that their programme of

work is of direct relevance to the aims and purposes of the United Nations and, in the case of national organizations, after consultation with the Member State concerned. The views expressed by the Member State, if any, shall be communicated to the non-governmental organization concerned, which shall have the opportunity to respond to those views through the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

9. The organization shall be of recognized standing within the particular field of its competence or of a representative character. Where there exist a number of organizations with similar objectives, interests and basic views in a given field, they may, for the purposes of consultation with the Council, form a joint committee or other body authorized to carry on such consultation for the group as a whole.

10. The organization shall have an established headquarters, with an executive officer. It shall have a democratically adopted constitution, a copy of which shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and which shall provide for the determination of policy by a conference, congress or other representative body, and for an executive organ responsible to the policy-making body.

11. The organization shall have authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives. Evidence of this authority shall be presented, if requested.

12. The organization shall have a representative structure and possess appropriate mechanisms of accountability to its members, who shall exercise effective control over its policies and actions through the exercise of voting rights or other appropriate democratic and transparent decision-making processes. Any such organization that is not established by a governmental entity or intergovernmental agreement

shall be considered a non-governmental organization for the purpose of these arrangements, including organizations that accept members designated by governmental authorities, provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of views of the organization.

13. The basic resources of the organization shall be derived in the main part from contributions of the national affiliates or other components or from individual members. Where voluntary contributions have been received, their amounts and donors shall be faithfully revealed to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Where, however, the above criterion is not fulfilled and an organization is financed from other sources, it must explain to the satisfaction of the Committee its reasons for not meeting the requirements laid down in this paragraph. Any financial contribution or other support, direct or indirect, from a Government to the organization shall be openly declared to the Committee through the Secretary-General and fully recorded in the financial and other records of the organization and shall be devoted to purposes in accordance with the aims of the United Nations.

14. In considering the establishment of consultative relations with a non-governmental organization, the Council will take into account whether the field of activity of the organization is wholly or mainly within the field of a specialized agency, and whether or not it could be admitted when it has, or may have, a consultative arrangement with a specialized agency.

15. The granting, suspension and withdrawal of consultative status, as well as the interpretation of norms and decisions relating to this matter, are the prerogative of Member States exercised through the Economic and Social Council and its Committee on

Non-Governmental Organizations. A non-governmental organization applying for general or special consultative status or a listing on the Roster shall have the opportunity to respond to any objections being raised in the Committee before the Committee takes its decision.

16. The provisions of the present resolution shall apply to the United Nations regional commissions and their subsidiary bodies *mutatis mutandis*.

17. In recognizing the evolving relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, will consider reviewing the consultative arrangements as and when necessary to facilitate, in the most effective manner possible, the contributions of non-governmental organizations to the work of the United Nations.

## **Part II**

### **PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE NATURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

18. A clear distinction is drawn in the Charter of the United Nations between participation without vote in the deliberations of the Council and the arrangements for consultation. Under Articles 69 and 70, participation is provided for only in the case of States not members of the Council, and of specialized agencies. Article 71, applying to non-governmental organizations, provides for suitable arrangements for consultation. This distinction, deliberately made in the Charter, is fundamental and the arrangements for consultation should not be such as to accord to non-governmental organizations the same rights of participation as are accorded to States not members of the Council and to the specialized agencies brought into relationship with the United Nations.

19. The arrangements should not be such as to overburden the Council or transform it from a body for coordination of policy and action, as contemplated in the Charter, into a general forum for discussion.

20. Decisions on arrangements for consultation should be guided by the principle that consultative arrangements are to be made, on the one hand, for the purpose of enabling the Council or one of its bodies to secure expert information or advice from organizations having special competence in the subjects for which consultative arrangements are made, and, on the other hand, to enable international, regional, subregional and national organizations that represent important elements of public opinion to express their views. Therefore, the arrangements for consultation made with each organization should relate to the subjects for which that organization has a special competence or in which it has a special interest. The organizations given consultative status should be limited to those whose activities in fields set out in paragraph 1 above qualify them to make a significant contribution to the work of the Council and should, in sum, as far as possible reflect in a balanced way the major viewpoints or interests in these fields in all areas and regions of the world.

### **Part III**

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

21. In establishing consultative relationships with each organization, regard shall be had to the nature and scope of its activities and to the assistance it may be expected to give to the Council or its subsidiary bodies in carrying out the functions set out in Chapters IX and X of the Charter of the United Nations.

22. Organizations that are concerned with most of the activities of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have substantive and sustained contributions to make to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations in fields set out in paragraph 1 above, and are closely involved with the economic and social life of the peoples of the areas they represent and whose membership, which should be considerable, is broadly representative of major segments of society in a large number of countries in different regions of the world shall be known as organizations in general consultative status.

23. Organizations that have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and that are known within the fields for which they have or seek consultative status shall be known as organizations in special consultative status.

24. Other organizations that do not have general or special consultative status but that the Council, or the Secretary-General of the United Nations in consultation with the Council or its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, considers can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council or its subsidiary bodies or other United Nations bodies within their competence shall be included in a list (to be known as the Roster). This list may also include organizations in consultative status or a similar relationship with a specialized agency or a United Nations body. These organizations shall be available for consultation at the request of the Council or its subsidiary bodies. The fact that an organization is on the Roster shall not in itself be regarded as a qualification for general or special consultative status should an organization seek such status.

25. Organizations to be accorded special consultative status because of their interest in the field of human rights should pursue the goals of promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

26. Major organizations one of whose primary purposes is to promote the aims, objectives and purposes of the United Nations and a furtherance of the understanding of its work may be accorded consultative status.

### **Part VIII**

#### **SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CONSULTATIVE STATUS**

55. Organizations granted consultative status by the Council and those on the Roster shall conform at all times to the principles governing the establishment and nature of their consultative relations with the Council. In periodically reviewing the activities of non-governmental organizations on the basis of the reports submitted under paragraph 61 (c) below and other relevant information, the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall determine the extent to which the organizations have complied with the principles governing consultative status and have contributed to the work of the Council, and may recommend to the Council suspension of or exclusion from consultative status of organizations that have not met the requirements for consultative status as set forth in the present resolution.

56. In cases where the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has decided to recommend that the general or special

consultative status of a non-governmental organization or its listing on the Roster be suspended or withdrawn, the non-governmental organization concerned shall be given written reasons for that decision and shall have an opportunity to present its response for appropriate consideration by the Committee as expeditiously as possible.

57. The consultative status of non-governmental organizations with the Economic and Social Council and the listing of those on the Roster shall be suspended up to three years or withdrawn in the following cases:

- (a) If an organization, either directly or through its affiliates or representatives acting on its behalf, clearly abuses its status by engaging in a pattern of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations including unsubstantiated or politically motivated acts against Member States of the United Nations incompatible with those purposes and principles;
- (b) If there exists substantiated evidence of influence from proceeds resulting from internationally recognized criminal activities such as the illicit drugs trade, money-laundering or the illegal arms trade;
- (c) If, within the preceding three years, an organization did not make any positive or effective contribution to the work of the United Nations and, in particular, of the Council or its commissions or other subsidiary organs.

58. The consultative status of organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and the listing of those on the Roster shall be suspended or withdrawn by the decision of the Economic and Social Council on the recommendation of its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

59. An organization whose consultative status or whose listing on the Roster is withdrawn may be entitled to reapply for consultative status

or for inclusion on the Roster not sooner than three years after the effective date of such withdrawal.

For more information:

*[www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1996/eres1996-31.htm)*.

# **Annex IV**

## **Description of the DPI Accreditation Process and Criteria**

NGOs that are committed and have the means to conduct effective information programmes with their constituents and to a broader audience about UN activities may apply for association with DPI.

- The NGO must support and respect the principles of the UN Charter and have a clear mission statement that is consistent with those principles;
- The NGO must be recognized nationally or internationally;
- The NGO should operate solely on a non-for-profit basis and have tax-exempt status;
- The NGO must have the commitment and the means to conduct effective information programmes, with its constituents and to a broader audience (about UN activities);
- The NGO should have an established record of continuity of work for a minimum of three years and should show promise of sustained activity in the future;

- The NGO should have a satisfactory record of collaboration with UN Information Centres/Services or other parts of the UN system prior to association;
- The NGO should provide an audited annual financial statement, conducted by a qualified, independent accountant;
- The NGO should have statutes/by-laws providing for a transparent process of making decisions, elections of officers and members of the Board of Directors.

Associated NGOs are expected to devote a portion of their information programmes to promoting knowledge of the principles and activities of the UN. In addition, an evaluation and review process was in place in 2002 wherein NGOs associated with DPI are expected to keep the DPI/NGO Section abreast of their activities by providing a short summary of their UN-related activities and samples of their information materials every four years relating to the work of the UN. The information materials are also made available for perusal at the DPI/NGO Resource Centre.

## **Annex V**

# **Three Generations of UN-Civil Society Relations: A Quick Sketch**

**by Tony Hill**

### **The First Generation**

In the span of time since the UN's creation in 1945, it is possible to speak of two generations, and the emergence of a third generation, of UN-Civil Society relations. The first, lasting up to the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, involved mostly International NGOs (INGOs) of different varieties, including professional and business associations that were granted formal consultative relations with the UN (ECOSOC) in recognition of their international standing. Just as the Cold War shaped the inter-governmental deliberative processes of the UN, so too did it impact strongly on the dynamics and role of INGOs at the UN. What is striking about this period is how little actual

engagement there was of INGOs in the work of the UN. NGO forums may have been organized around UN Conferences but they remained more or less autonomous, commenting on UN deliberations at arms length. There were some exceptions to this, in particular the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, and the work of International Coalition for Development Action (ICDA) and others that engaged in the North-South Dialogue for a NIEO (under UNCTAD auspices) through the 1970s and early 1980s. By and large, however, the relations between the UN and NGOs in the first generation were more of a formal and ceremonial nature rather than of a political nature.

This is not to say that the role of INGOs in the first generation of UN-Civil Society relations was unimportant or inconsequential, far from it. The first generation of non-governmental organizations brought many new ideas and eloquent spokespersons to the work of the UN. Above all, they established the right of non-governmental actors to participate in UN deliberations, and gave real, practical expression to the possibilities opened up by Article 71 of the UN Charter. But that was a different political epoch, prior to the emergence of global civil society comprised of international, regional and national non-governmental organizations of all kinds, the emergence of the UN and its system of organizations as the backbone of the world system of global governance, and the emergence of new ideas and practices of democratic governance involving the on-going participation of citizens and their organizations in governance processes.

### **The Second Generation**

The ending of the Cold War and the decisions taken by the UN to embark upon a series of major World Conferences and Summits through the 1990s, ushered in a second generation of NGOs and UN-NGO relationships. Large numbers of non-governmental actors, in

particular, national NGOs from developing countries, from the Western hemisphere and, albeit to a lesser extent, from East-Central European post-communist societies, appeared around the major UN Conferences on Environment and Development, Population and Development, Human Rights, Women's Rights, Social Development, Human Settlements and Food Security, and their preparatory and follow-up processes. In marked contrast to the first generation of UN relations with non-governmental actors, the newly-emerged national and regional NGOs sought to engage directly in intergovernmental deliberations and, through advocacy and mobilization work, influence their outcomes. At the same time many of the traditional International NGOs began adapting to these new realities and reinventing themselves – with varying degrees of success – while many new forms of global and transnational organizations began to emerge such as the Oxfam family, the Third World Network, and the International Coalition for a Criminal Court. It is also true to say that over this period the presence of the private economic sector at the UN started to become much more marked.

In 1993, partly in response to the experience of NGO participation in the Rio Conference of 1992, a working group established by ECOSOC began a review and evaluation of relations with NGOs and Civil Society, leading three years later to the adoption of Resolution 1996/31 as the formal, legal framework for UN-NGO relations. Resolution 1996/31 replaced Resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 1968 and advanced on it by explicitly opening up UN consultative status to national NGOs – despite the efforts of some of the first generation of INGOs who allied with some of the most reluctant UN Member States to try to prevent this opening up to national (and regional) NGOs. Since 1996 there has been an exponential growth of NGOs, many of them national NGOs, applying for consultative status, with the number of those acquiring it growing from 744 in 1992 to 2,350

in 2003 with, today, a growing backlog of applications waiting for review by ECOSOC's Committee on NGOs.

The second generation of UN-NGO relations is marked by the much larger scale of the NGO presence across the UN system, the more diverse institutional character of the organizations involved, now including national, regional and international NGOs, networks, coalitions and alliances, and the greater diversity of the issues that NGOs seek to address at the UN. Above all, the second generation of UN-NGO relations are essentially political and reflect the motivation of NGOs to engage with the UN as part of the institutional architecture of global governance. This should not hide the fact that while the majority of civil society participants act as a "loyal opposition" to the UN (i.e. do not put into question its existence, principles and objectives), the opening of the UN to national NGOs has also allowed the participation of very conservative national non-governmental actors largely, but not only, based in the United States, who seek to roll-back or curtail UN agreements in areas such as women's reproductive rights, firearms control, and pre-emptive military action, and who even advocate the virtual abolition of the UN in some cases.

Another important feature of the second generation of UN-NGO relations has been the significant increase in operational cooperation between the Secretariats of UN organizations and non-governmental actors. UN agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, and others such as IFAD, FAO, UNODC and ILO, collectively fund a significant and diverse range of non-governmental projects and activities in the global South, unlike in the past when UN system funding was channelled almost exclusively to governments. UN funding for non-governmental actors is also significant in humanitarian crises and refugee-related work (WFP, UNHCR and others) with between 33% and 50% of UNHCR's operational budget disbursed through NGOs,

both national and international, with efforts to give priority to the former. In addition, there are large numbers of examples of voluntary – as opposed to contractual – cooperation between non governmental actors and UN Secretariats (such as the current Civil Society Hearings in the run-up to UNCTAD XI in June of this year and the International Planning Committee, constituted by non-governmental actors internationally, and involving groups such as Via Campesina, to engage with follow-up to the 1996 World Food Summit and the Rome-based food agencies – FAO, IFAD, WFP).

Similarly, there are many examples of cooperation between the UN system's field offices and information centres in the developing countries and the local non-governmental community although it is recognized by the agencies concerned (UNDP, UNICEF and others), that progress has been patchy and more efforts need to be made in general to connect UN country and regional offices to local and regional civil society. UNDP, for example, has introduced awards for Resident Coordinators whose office works with local civil society on innovative projects and initiatives. While most attention focuses on civil society participation in the inter-governmental processes of UN World Conferences and Summits, and their follow-up at the international level, this growing field of cooperation of various forms between UN Secretariats and offices, and civil society organizations, described above, is a significant development in the practice of the UN system as part of the global governance and implementation architecture that will continue to evolve and develop.

### **A Third Generation?**

The outline of a possible third generation of UN-Civil Society relations has now begun to emerge. This involves like-minded coalitions of governments and civil society (International Criminal Court,

Landmine Convention), and various forms of multi-stakeholder, public-private, public policy networks and partnerships such as the Global Compact, the GAVI initiative and the over 200 “Track II” partnership agreements emerging from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August-September 2002. These new forms of partnership relations currently co-exist with the second-generation political and advocacy role of civil society and raise many critical questions concerning the role of the UN as a broker of partnerships, the future of multilateralism as a form of global governance and the future of the UN’s relations with the second generation of largely advocacy NGOs, many of whom view these latest developments with scepticism, to say the least.

Today, an unprecedented number and variety of civil society and business-related organizations participate in the work of the UN system. At the political level, the UN has shifted from an organization in which only governments spoke to only governments, to one that now brings together the political power of governments, the economic power of the corporate sector, and the “public opinion” power of civil society (and the global communication and information media) as participants in the global policy dialogue – without denying that there are areas of UN work, disarmament, for example, where today there is a clear civil society deficit in the governance architecture\*. The evolution of this third generation of UN-Civil Society relations cannot be predicted in advance since it will depend upon forces whose interaction will shape outcomes. Within the UN system, the report of the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel and its ensuing recommendations and follow-up, will certainly set the political tone, and a practical agenda, for effectively managing, and benefiting from, the UN’s engagement with civil society. Outside the UN it will very much depend upon the extent to which global civil society continues to invest its “public opinion” power and resources in UN processes.

UN work in human rights, food security, economic and social development, environment and sustainable development, the Least-Developed Countries, disarmament, international justice and law, security, humanitarian emergencies and refugees will continue to attract global civil society constituencies concerned with influencing the outcomes of policy deliberations on this set of global issues. The Millennium Development Campaign also appears to be mobilizing significant new constituencies of non-governmental actors in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, it is striking that the global social justice movement that expresses itself through the World and Regional Social Forums that have been held since the historic Porto Alegre World Social Forum in 2001, have largely ignored the UN – although some of the leading organizations of the Social Forums are also active at the UN, and it does show that the UN is still perceived in a different, more benign light than the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, who are severely criticized at these gatherings.

Until now, the Forums have had a policy of not engaging with the institutions of global governance and their member governments although, following Mumbai in 2004, the question of whether and how to engage now seems to be on the political agenda of the global social justice movement. Whether and how this may impact on the UN in the future depends to a large extent upon the degree to which the UN provides a platform for discussing alternative ways of managing globalization and for realizing progress towards the goals enshrined in agreements such as Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Declaration. The recent report of the ILO-initiated World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, (in effect, the follow up to the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development) marks an important new contribution in that regard.

### **Looking Forward**

Our global governance architecture, embracing the UN system and many other organizations and institutions beyond, is at once in crisis and developing rapidly; civil society has become a vital driver of change and democratisation of global decision-making. Civil society is drawn to the UN because it provides fora, based on the ethics, moral principles and aspirations of the Charter, in which governments exercise their power at the international level and in which even the smallest state has formal equality with the most powerful. There are many forces at play as the UN moves to a third generation of relationships with civil society, and many unknowns. The dialectic at play will hinge upon the degree to which governments invest political capital (and financial resources) in the UN system as it moves forward as the existing backbone of the global governance system; and the degree to which civil society continues to invest its “public opinion” power in UN fora both to influence and empower governments and counter the power and influence of the private sector.

The international community has, by and large, accepted that good governance, nationally and internationally, demands the participation of independent groups and organizations of civil society, and representatives of the private economy, in governance processes. At the international level, and across the UN system, tremendous progress has been made in opening-up intergovernmental decision-making to the participation and scrutiny of civil society, thereby making it transparent and accountable in a way that the UN’s far-sighted founders could never have imagined. Civil society has also enriched intergovernmental deliberations by bringing forward new information, different experiences and perspectives and has contributed enormously to the practical implementation of global governance outcomes. Planet-wide problems today—poverty, epidemics, environmental destruction, human rights abuses, arms proliferation and insecurity—can

only be addressed globally. Despite recent setbacks, the architecture, dynamics and processes of global governance have to maintain forward momentum and evolution if these problems are to be adequately addressed. Global governance will continue to be a work-in-progress with enormous challenges to be surmounted, but there is simply no alternative.

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### *Explanatory Note*

\*By global governance is meant a vision and a dynamic and open-ended process *which seeks to achieve* the coming together at the international level of national governments and other political authorities, civil society and the private economic sector, to develop consensus and reach agreements to take collective action to address global issues, problems and threats and to promote trust, harmony and well-being, security and cooperation between nation states and peoples of the world.



# Acronyms

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AMR   | Annual Ministerial Review  |
| AOSIS | Alliance of Small Island States  |
| AU    | African Union  |
| CBD   | Convention on Biodiversity   |
| CBOs  | Community-Based Organizations  |
| CCD   | Convention to Combat Desertification   |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of<br>Discrimination against Women      |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered<br>Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CONGO | Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship<br>with the United Nations         |
| COW   | Committee of the Whole   |
| CSD   | Commission on Sustainable Development  |
| CSOs  | Civil Society Organizations  |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| DAW        | Division for the Advancement of Women   |
| DDA        | Department for Disarmament Affairs  |
| DPA        | Department of Political Affairs   |
| DESA       | Department of Social and Economic Affairs                                     |
| DGACCS     | Department of General Assembly Affairs and<br>Conference Services             |
| DoC        | Declaration of Commitment   |
| DPI        | Department of Public Information  |
| DPKO       | Department of Peacekeeping Operations   |
| ECOSOC     | Economic and Social Council   |
| EU         | European Union  |
| FAO        | Food and Agriculture Organization   |
| FfD        | Financing for Development   |
| G-77/China | Group of 77 Developing Countries and China                                    |
| GA         | General Assembly  |
| HLS        | High-Level Segment  |
| HRC        | Human Rights Council  |
| IAEA       | International Atomic Energy Agency  |
| ICAO       | International Civil Aviation Organization                                     |
| ICJ        | International Court of Justice  |
| ICTs       | Information and Communication Technologies                                    |
| IFAD       | International Fund for Agricultural Development                               |
| ILO        | International Labour Organization   |
| IMF        | International Monetary Fund   |
| IMO        | International Maritime Organization   |
| INSTRAW    | International Research and Training Institute for the<br>Advancement of Women |
| ISDR       | International Strategy for Disaster Reduction                                 |
| ITC        | International Trade Centre  |
| ITU        | International Telecommunication Union   |
| JUSCANZ    | Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia<br>and New Zealand                |

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|----------|---|
| LDCs     | Least Developed Countries   |
| MDGs     | Millennium Development Goals  |
| MoU      | Memorandum of Understanding   |
| NAM      | Non-Aligned Movement  |
| NGO      | Non-Governmental Organization   |
| OCHA     | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs   |
| OIC      | Organization of Islamic Conference  |
| OHCHR    | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  |
| OHRLLS   | Office of the High Representative for the Least<br>Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing<br>Countries and Small Island Developing States |
| PCB      | Programme Coordinating Board  |
| PoA      | Programme of Action   |
| PrepCom  | Preparatory Committee   |
| PRSP     | Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers   |
| SIDS     | Small Island Developing States  |
| UNAIDS   | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  |
| UNCTAD   | United Nations Conference on Trade<br>and Development   |
| UNCDF    | United Nations Capital Development Fund   |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme  |
| UNECA    | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa   |
| UNECE    | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe   |
| UN ECLAC | United Nations Economic Commission<br>for Latin America and the Caribbean   |
| UN ESCAP | United Nations Economic Commission<br>for Asia and the Pacific  |
| UN ESCWA | United Nations Economic Commission<br>for Western Asia  |
| UNEP     | United Nations Environment Programme  |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural<br>Organization   |

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|------------|--|
| UNFCC      | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                            |
| UNFF       | United Nations Forum on Forests  |
| UNFIP      | United Nations Fund for International Partnership                                |
| UNFPA      | United Nations Population Fund   |
| UNGASS     | UN General Assembly Special Session  |
| UN-HABITAT | United Nations Human Settlements Programme                                       |
| UNHCR      | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                                    |
| UNICEF     | United Nations Children's Fund   |
| UNICRI     | United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute                |
| UNIDIR     | United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research                                |
| UNIDO      | United Nations Industrial Development Organization                               |
| UNIFEM     | United Nations Development Fund for Women  |
| UNITAR     | United Nations Institute for Training and Research                               |
| UN-NGLS    | United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service                                  |
| UNODC      | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime   |
| UNOG       | United Nations Office at Geneva  |
| UNON       | United Nations Office at Nairobi   |
| UNOV       | United Nations Office at Vienna  |
| UNPFII     | United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues                              |
| UNRISD     | United Nations Research Institute for Social Development                         |
| UNRWA      | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East |
| UNU        | United Nations University  |
| UNU-WIDER  | United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research     |
| UNV        | United Nations Volunteers  |
| UPU        | Universal Postal Union   |
| WEOG       | Western European and Other Groups  |

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|-------|--|
| WFP   | World Food Programme                     |
| WFUNA | World Federation of UN Associations      |
| WHO   | World Health Organization                |
| WIPO  | World Intellectual Property Organization |
| WMO   | World Meteorological Organization        |
| WSIS  | World Summit on the Information Society  |
| WSSD  | World Summit on Sustainable Development  |
| WTO   | World Trade Organization                 |
| WUF   | World Urban Forum                        |



# Suggested Reading and Additional Resources

## **NGLS Publications:**

*UN/Civil Society Engagement: Year in Review 2006* (2007). NGLS: Geneva and New York. This publication gives a snapshot picture of civil society engagement in the policy and normative work of the UN and reviews the various consultations, forums, policy dialogues, hearings, and CSO advisory committees that have taken place throughout the year 2006.

*The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations by Hilikka Pietilä*, (2007). NGLS: Geneva and New York.

*Debating NGO Accountability by Jem Bendell*, (2006). NGLS: Geneva and New York.

*UN System Engagement with NGOs, Civil Society, the Private Sector and Other Actors* (2005). NGLS: Geneva and New York.

These and other NGLS publications are available online at [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org).

**Additional Resources:**

**United Nations**

**Global Issues on the UN Agenda:**

[www.un.org/issues](http://www.un.org/issues)

**United Nations Documentation Centre:**

[www.un.org/documents](http://www.un.org/documents)

**United Nations Treaty Collection:**

<http://untreaty.un.org>

**Reference document** on the participation of civil society in United Nations conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly during the 1990s: [www.un.org/ga/president/55/speech/civilsociety .htm](http://www.un.org/ga/president/55/speech/civilsociety.htm).

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):**

A Handbook for NGOs: [www.ohchr.org/english/about/ngohandbook .htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/ngohandbook.htm).

The Handbook aims to provide NGOs with a comprehensive and user-friendly guide to the work of OHCHR, including key information on human rights mechanisms, entry points for NGOs and contact details with a view to assisting NGOs in identifying areas of possible cooperation and partnership with OHCHR; it also anticipates the changes of the current United Nations reform process.

### **United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD):**

A recent UNRISD project on UN World Summits and Civil Society Engagement aimed to critically assess the impact of the various UN summits on civil society activism at global, national and local levels. It focused, first, on the extent to which UN summits have been a meaningful mechanism for creating a favourable political space for increased civil society density and activism. Second, it examined the range and quality of civil society activities in planning, implementing and monitoring the principal agenda and agreed programmes subsequent to the world summits. Third, it looked at the stimulus created by UN summits for greater linkages among civil society organizations, both horizontally and vertically. Information on this and other UNRISD research projects is available on the UNRISD website: [www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org).

A number of publications based on this research are available online, including:

#### *UN World Summits and Civil Society: The State of the Art*

Survey evidence reviewed in this paper shows that an attitude of active dialogue with UN world summits is dominant among civil society organizations, followed by policy criticism from the outside, and efforts at integration in official summits. A range of alternative policy proposals is also discussed, with an emphasis on those receiving higher priority from CSOs.

#### *Civil Society in United Nations Conferences: A Literature Review*

When civil society engagement in global conferences is studied, there is usually limited attention to the effects this participation can have on civil society itself. This paper outlines some of the results of civil society involvement in global governance for developments within civil society.

### *Political Space for Non-Governmental Organizations in United Nations World Summit Processes*

The 1990s showed the necessity of cooperation between the United Nations and civil society actors. Yet many UN decisions with regard to NGO involvement seem to be dominated by a kind of “cost-benefit analysis”. Instead, a moderating and mediating approach should be adopted toward the engagement of these actors in UN events.

### **NGO Resources**

Report on the International Conference for the Reform of International Institutions by the UBUNTU Forum Secretariat held in Geneva (ILO Headquarters) in November 2006: [www.ubuntu.upc.edu/pdf/geneva\\_memo\\_06.pdf](http://www.ubuntu.upc.edu/pdf/geneva_memo_06.pdf). “UN summits (for example, the recent gatherings held in Monterrey on Financing for Development and in Johannesburg on Sustainable Development) have given rise to extremely interesting declarations and action plans but without the resources to fulfil them. Moreover, much of the responsibility has been shifted to the ‘global market.’ In the light of these circumstances, there is a need for in-depth analysis on how the System of International Institutions should re-orientate towards a greater, if any, ability to bring about global solutions to current global problems. In a world in which conflict, violence, fundamentalism, etc. seem to be winning the war over peace and individual and collective human rights, analysis and alternative wide-ranging proposals are more urgently required today than ever before.” (Introduction to the report.) Further information on the World Campaign for in-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions is available online: [www.reformcampaign.net](http://www.reformcampaign.net).

*How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings* by Felix Dodds, (2004). Earthscan: London and Sterling, VA.

## **UNITED NATIONS NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON SERVICE (NGLS)**

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), established in 1975, is a jointly-financed interagency programme of the UN system. NGLS programme activities deal with the full UN agenda on sustainable development, human emergencies and refugees, peace and disarmament and the Least Developed Countries and operate across the entire UN system of agencies, programmes, funds and departments concerned with these issues. NGLS works with national and regional NGOs from developing and industrialized countries and international NGOs.

The information produced by NGLS both in published form and electronically combines public information on UN and NGO events and issues, practical “how to” guides to the UN system for NGOs, and substantive analysis of issues on the international agenda. NGLS’s publications (electronic and print) are distributed to almost 10,000 NGOs worldwide, around 50% based in developing countries, and to over 1,000 development professionals in the UN system, governments and bilateral agencies.

All NGLS’s publications are also available on its website [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org). As part of its outreach activities, NGLS also disseminates information on a range of activities on the UN agenda to NGO electronic mail networks and listservs. NGLS also provides advice, guidance and support to the organizations of the UN system as they seek to develop constructive working relationships with the nongovernmental community.

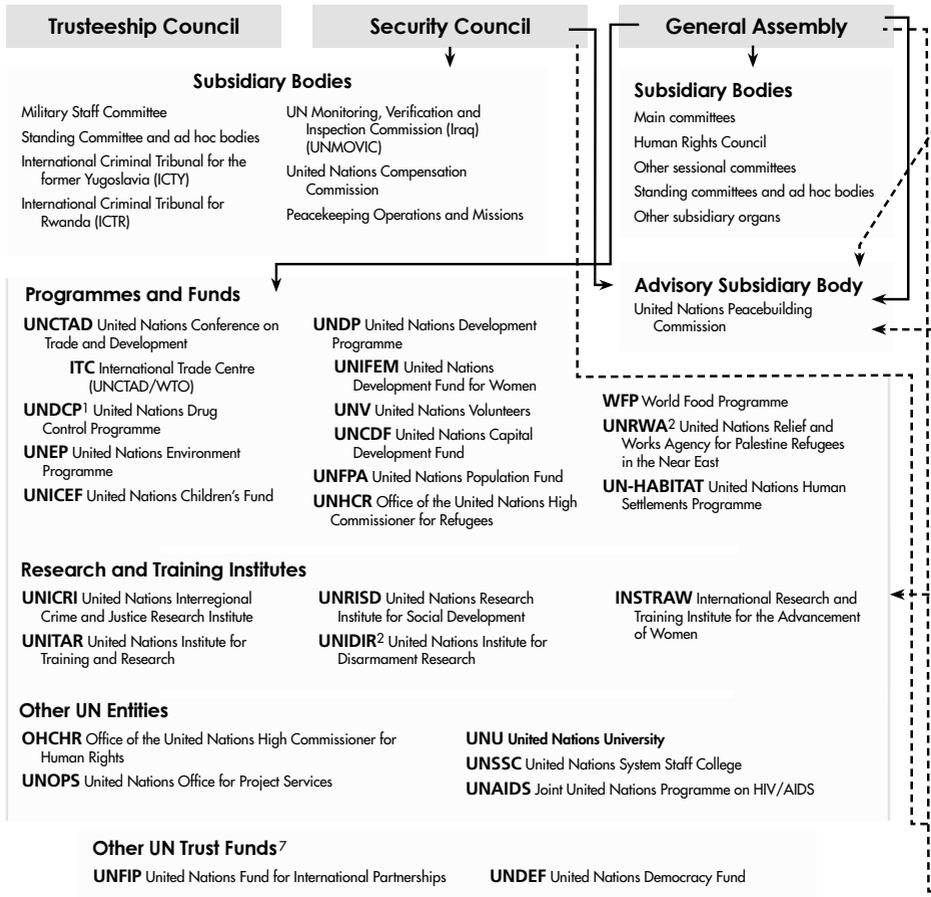
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# The United Nations System

## Principal Organs



**NOTES:** Solid lines from a Principal Organ indicate a direct reporting relationship; dashes indicate a non-subsidiary relationship.

<sup>1</sup> The UN Drug Control Programme is part of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA and UNIDIR report only to the GA

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Ethics Office and the United Nations Ombudsman's Office report directly to the Secretary-General

<sup>4</sup> IAEA reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly (GA)

<sup>5</sup> The CTBTO Prep.Com and OPCW report to the GA

<sup>6</sup> Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the UN and each other through the coordinating machinery of the ECOSOC at the intergovernmental level, and through the Chief Executives Board for coordination (CEB) at the inter-secretariat level

<sup>7</sup> UNFIP is an autonomous trust fund operating under the leadership of the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General. UNDEF's advisory board recommends funding proposals for approval by the Secretary-General.

## Economic and Social Council

### Functional Commissions

Commissions on:  
Narcotic Drugs  
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice  
Science and Technology for Development  
Sustainable Development  
Status of Women  
Population and Development  
Commission for Social Development  
Statistical Commission

### Regional Commissions

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)  
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)  
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

### Other Bodies

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII)  
United Nations Forum on Forests  
Sessional and standing committees  
Expert, ad hoc and related bodies

### Related Organizations

**WTO** World Trade Organization  
**IAEA**<sup>4</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency  
**CTBTO Prep.Com**<sup>5</sup> Prep.Com for the Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty Organization  
**OPCW**<sup>5</sup> Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

## International Court of Justice

### Specialized Agencies<sup>6</sup>

**ILO** International Labour Organization  
**FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
**WHO** World Health Organization

### World Bank Group

**IBRD** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
**IDA** International Development Association  
**IFC** International Finance Corporation  
**MIGA** Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency  
**ICSID** International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

**IMF** International Monetary Fund

**ICAO** International Civil Aviation Organization

**IMO** International Maritime Organization

**ITU** International Telecommunication Union

**UPU** Universal Postal Union

**WMO** World Meteorological Organization

**WIPO** World Intellectual Property Organization

**IFAD** International Fund for Agricultural Development

**UNIDO** United Nations Industrial Development Organization

**UNWTO** World Tourism Organization

## Secretariat

### Departments and Offices

**OSG**<sup>3</sup> Office of the Secretary-General  
**OIOS** Office of Internal Oversight Services  
**OLA** Office of Legal Affairs  
**DPA** Department of Political Affairs  
**DDA** Department for Disarmament Affairs  
**DPKO** Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
**OCHA** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
**DESA** Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
**DGACM** Department for General Assembly and Conference Management  
**DPI** Department of Public Information  
**DM** Department of Management  
**OHRLLS** Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States  
**DSS** Department of Safety and Security  
**UNODC** United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



**UNOG** UN Office at Geneva  
**UNOV** UN Office at Vienna  
**UNON** UN Office at Nairobi

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**The work of NGLS is currently supported by:**

- United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA—Lead Agency)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD—Administering Agency)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Labour Office (ILO)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HABITAT)
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Department of Public Information (UN/DPI)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

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