**IDA Board webinar: United Nations structure in New York**

1. **Brief history of the UN and its mandate (establishment, location, key documents, terminology, regional groups)**

Brief history

The **United Nations** (**UN**) is an [intergovernmental organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intergovernmental_organization) to promote international co-operation and to create and maintain international order. Reason for establishment was to prevent another world war, therefore in 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the [United Nations Conference on International Organization](http://www.un.org/en/sections/history-united-nations-charter/1945-san-francisco-conference/index.html) to draw up the [United Nations Charter](http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html). Those delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States at [Dumbarton Oaks](http://www.un.org/en/sections/history-united-nations-charter/1944-1945-dumbarton-oaks-and-yalta/index.html), United States in August-October 1944. The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States. The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945. Today the UN has 193 Member States. The UN's Chief Administrative Officer is the [Secretary-General](http://www.un.org/sg/).

The UN's mission to preserve world peace was complicated in its early decades by the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) between the US and Soviet Union and their respective allies. The organization participated in major actions in [Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War) and [the Congo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Operation_in_the_Congo), as well as approving the creation of the state of Israel in 1947. The organization's membership grew significantly following widespread [decolonization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decolonization) in the 1960s, and by the 1970s its budget for economic and social development programmes far outstripped its spending on [peacekeeping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peacekeeping). After the end of the Cold War, the UN took on major military and peacekeeping missions across the world with varying degrees of success. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

Locations

The [headquarters of the UN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headquarters_of_the_United_Nations) is in [Manhattan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan), [New York City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City), and experiences extraterritoriality. Further main offices are situated in [Geneva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Office_at_Geneva), [Nairobi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Office_at_Nairobi), and [Vienna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Office_at_Vienna).

Funding

The organization is financed by assessed and voluntary contributions from its member states.

Objectives

Its objectives include maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights, fostering social and economic development, protecting the environment, and providing humanitarian aid in cases of famine, natural disaster, and armed conflict. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. Due to the powers vested in its [Charter](http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/) and its unique international character, the United Nations can take action on the issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more.

1. **The main bodies of the UN (Security Council, General Assembly, ECOSOC, etc)**

The main organs of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat.  All were [established in 1945](http://wss1.un.org:8082/node/156296) when the UN was founded.

#### General Assembly

The [General Assembly](http://www.un.org/en/ga/) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All [193 Member States](http://www.un.org/en/members/) of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation.  Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and [general debate](http://gadebate.un.org/), which many heads of state attend and address. The General Assembly, each year, elects a [GA President](http://www.un.org/pga/) to serve a one-year term of office.

Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.  Each member states has one vote. **Apart from approval of budgetary matters, resolutions are not binding on the members**. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security that are under consideration by the Security Council.

The work of the General Assembly is supported by its main committees, organized around thematic topics: (i) [First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Assembly_First_Committee); (ii) [Second Committee (Economic and Financial)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_and_Financial_Committee); (iii) Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural); (iv) [Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Fourth_Committee); (v) Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary); (vi) Sixth Committee (Legal).

Each Member State may be represented by one person on each Main Committee and on any other committee that may be established upon which all Member States have the right to be represented. Member States may also assign advisers, technical advisers, experts or persons of similar status to these committee.

#### Security Council

The [Security Council](http://www.un.org/en/sc/) has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security.  It has 15 Members ([5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members](http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/)). Each Member has one vote. The five permanent members hold [veto power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_veto_power) over UN resolutions, allowing a permanent member to block adoption of a resolution, though not debate. The ten temporary seats are held for two-year terms, with five member states per year voted in by the General Assembly on a [regional basis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Regional_Groups). **Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.** The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The Security Council has a [Presidency](http://www.un.org/en/sc/presidency/), which rotates, and changes, every month.

Current members: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly (with end of term date)—Bolivia (term ends 2018), Egypt (2017), Ethiopia (2018), Italy (2018), Japan (2017), Kazakhstan (2018), Senegal (2017), Sweden (2018), Ukraine (2017), Uruguay (2017).

#### Economic and Social Council

The [Economic and Social Council](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/) is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals. It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies.  It has [54 Members](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/members.shtml), elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. The president is elected for a one-year term and chosen amongst the small or middle powers represented on ECOSOC. It is the United Nations’ central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on [sustainable development](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/) and it assist the General Assembly on these issues.

ECOSOC's has subsidiary bodies, called functional commissions, that include: Statistical Commission, Commission on Population and Development, Commission for Social Development, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, United Nations Forum on Forests.

ECOSOC has Regional Commissions:

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

The High Level Political Forum, which is the central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, is convened under the ECOSOC.

#### Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under [Chapter XIII](http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-xiii/index.html), to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence. By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence.  The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994. By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994, the Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required -- by its decision or the decision of its President, or at the request of a majority of its members or the General Assembly or the Security Council.

#### International Court of Justice

The [International Court of Justice](http://www.icj-cij.org/homepage/index.php?lang=en) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands). The Court’s role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

#### Secretariat

The [Secretariat](http://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/secretariat.html) comprises the [Secretary-General](http://www.un.org/sg/) and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs.  The Secretary-General is [chief administrative officer](http://www.un.org/sg/en/content/role-secretary-general) of the Organization, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term.

1. **UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA) and their role (mandate, structure headquarters vs. country team)**

The UN specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the United Nations. All were brought into relationship with the UN through negotiated agreements. Some existed before the First World War. Some were associated with the League of Nations. Others were created almost simultaneously with the UN. Others were created by the UN to meet emerging needs.

#### UNDP = The [United Nations Development Programme](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html) works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN’s development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### UNICEF = The [United Nations Children's Fund](http://www.unicef.org/) provides long-term humanitarian and development assistance to children and mothers.

#### UNHCR = The [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home) – UNHCR protects refugees worldwide and facilitates their return home or resettlement.

#### UNFPA= The [United Nations Population Fund](http://www.unfpa.org/) – UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

#### UN Women = merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focus exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment. UN Women, among other issues, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; empowerment of women; and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

#### UN-Habitat = The mission of the [United Nations Human Settlements Programme](http://unhabitat.org/) is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

#### World Bank focuses on poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards worldwide by providing low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, and communications, among other things. The World Bank works in over 100 countries.

#### IMF = fosters economic growth and employment by providing temporary financial assistance to countries to help ease balance of payments adjustment and technical assistance. The IMF currently has $28 billion in outstanding loans to 74 nations.

#### WHO = The [World Health Organization](http://www.who.int/) is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system. The objective of WHO is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health, as defined in the WHO Constitution, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

#### UNESCO = The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](http://en.unesco.org/) focuses on everything from teacher training to helping improve education worldwide to protecting important historical and cultural sites around the world. UNESCO added 28 new World Heritage Sites this year to the list of irreplaceable treasures that will be protected for today's travelers and future generations.

#### ILO = [The International Labor Organization](http://www.ilo.org/)promotes international labor rights by formulating international standards on the freedom to associate, collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labor, and equality of opportunity and treatment.

UN Country Team

At the country level, UN Resident Coordinators and UN country teams (UNCTs) implement the UN Development Group strategic priorities by identifying the national policies, programmes and capacity development gaps and challenges, to which the UN system can best contribute under national ownership and leadership by mobilizing the full range of mandates and expertise of the UN development system. The United Nations has country teams in 131 countries, covering all of the 165 countries where there are United Nations programmes. The UN country teams encompass all the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery and transition in programme countries. The UNCT ensures inter-agency coordination and decision-making at the country level. The main purpose of the Country Team is for individual agencies to plan and work together, as part of the Resident Coordinator system, to ensure the delivery of tangible results in support of the development agenda of the Government.The UNCT is led by the UN Resident Coordinator, who is the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General. The Resident Coordinator reports to the UN Secretary-General through the Chair of the UNDG.

Resident Coordinator

The Resident Coordinator (RC) system encompasses all organizations of the United Nations system dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of their formal presence **in the country.** The RC system aims to bring together the different UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country level. Resident Coordinators, who are funded and managed by UNDP, lead UN country teams in more than 130 countries and are the designated representatives of the [Secretary-General](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary-General) for development operations. Working closely with national governments, Resident Coordinators and country teams advocate the interests and mandates of the UN system while drawing on the support and guidance of the entire UN family. Coordinating development operations promotes more strategic support for national plans and priorities, makes operations more efficient and reduces transaction costs for governments. This helps the UN to be a more relevant and reliable partner for governments.

1. **Key issues at the UN – from security to development**

International Peace and Security

Primary mandate of the UN, the UN works to maintain international peace and security in a world where security threats have become more complex. Main issues include: conflict prevention, mediation, support to electoral processes, prevent the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence, sustained monitoring and reporting on the violations affecting children in armed conflict, continued interest in using peacekeeping.

Humanitarian Assistance

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled in the past decade. The United Nations and its partners continue to respond to humanitarian needs and emergencies resulting from conflict and/or global challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation. [The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)](http://www.unocha.org/), part of the United Nations Secretariat, brings together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies, by mobilizing and coordinating effective and principled humanitarian action, advocating the rights of people in need, promoting preparedness and prevention, and facilitating sustainable solutions

Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

2015 marked the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the start of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and climate processes, which ultimately aim to eradicate poverty, improve people’s lives, and rapidly transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy, are mutually reinforcing: when acted on together, they can provide prosperity and security for present and future generations.

Human Rights

Promoting respect for human rights is a core purpose of the United Nations and defines its identity as an organization for people around the world. Member States have mandated the Secretary-General and the UN System to help them achieve the standards set out in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To do so, the UN System uses all the resources at its disposal, including its moral authority, diplomatic creativity and operational reach. Member States, however, have the primary responsibility for protecting human rights of their populations.

Some other key areas are: Development of Africa, [Justice and International Law](http://www.un.org/en/sections/priorities/justice-and-international-law/index.html), [Nuclear, Chemical and Conventional Weapons Disarmament](http://www.un.org/en/sections/priorities/nuclear-chemical-and-conventional-weapons-disarmament/index.html), [Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Counter-terrorism](http://www.un.org/en/sections/priorities/drug-control-crime-prevention-and-counter-terrorism/index.html)

1. **Disability across the UN system (Third Committee resolution, functional commissions, COSP, IASG, UNPRPD, SDGs – HLPF etc.)**

General Assembly – Third Committee

In the Third Committee each year we have a disability focused resolution. Either it is run by Tanzania and Phillipines always on development or it is a resolution by Sweden, New Zealand, Mexico which will have varies issues, in 2017 it will be focusing on women and girls with disabilities.

Additionally, in 2016 of the 50 resolutions adopted by the Third Committee, 21 (42%) included persons with disabilities. 21 of 22 resolutions relevant for persons with disabilities in the Third Committee included explicit references. 1 resolution was specifically focused on persons with disabilities “Inclusive Development for Persons with Disabilities”, which for the first time, removed references to the outdated and detrimental World Program of Action. 18 resolutions maintained, developed or revised explicit references to persons with disabilities; 17 comply with the CRPD and 1 remains contentious. 2 resolutions incorporated persons with disabilities for the first time: “Child, Early and Enforced Marriage” and “The Human Rights Treaty Body System” (new resolution); Of the 29 resolutions remaining, only one (“Human Rights in the Administration of Justice”) was relevant to persons with disabilities and did not include explicit references.

Conference of States Parties to the UN CRPD

The COSP has been established by CRPD Art 40. And meets under the General Assembly rules of procedures and it is organized by the Secretary General. No other human rights treaty has a conference of states parties.

ECOSOC Functional Commission

The Commission on Social Development has a mandate to address disability. The Special Rapporteur reports to the Commission.

Other functional commissions of ECOSOC, may and often address disability in their outcomes, (for example the Commission on the Status of Women adopts agreed conclusions annually and often there is reference to women with disabilities.

ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment = hasn’t traditionally addressed the issues related to persons with disabilities but since the establishment of the Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Team (primary coordination mechanism for the UN for humanitarian assistance) developing guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the humanitarian actions.

IASG – Inter Agency Support Group = is composed of UN agencies and the UN Secretariat (DESA) and IDA and IDDC are invited observers. It meets couple of times a year. Objective is to coordinate on disability related issues system-wide. DESA and OHCHR are the secretariat, and the current chair is WHO.

The UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) =is a unique collaborative effort that brings together UN entities, governments, DPOs and the broader civil society to advance disability rights around the world. In particular, the UNPRPD supports coalition-building and capacity-development at country level to facilitate the full implementation of the CRPD. The UN entities participating in the UNPRPD are the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The UNDP Poverty Group serves as the Technical Secretariat for the Partnership. The objective of the fund is to contribute to realizing the rights of persons with disabilities through UNDP policies, projects and programmes in partnership with governments and civil society.

1. **Groups and Stakeholders**

The official Regional Groups in the UN

The United Nations Regional Groups are the geopolitical regional groups of [member states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_states_of_the_United_Nations) of the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations). Originally, UN member states were unofficially grouped into five geopolitical regional groups. What began as an informal means of sharing the distribution of posts for General Assembly committees has taken on a much more expansive role. Depending on the UN context, regional groups control elections to UN-related positions, on the basis of geographic representation, as well as coordinate substantive policy, and form common fronts for negotiations and voting.

As of May 2014, the 193 UN member states are divided into five regional groups:[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Regional_Groups#cite_note-list-1)

* the [African Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Group), with 54 member states
* the [Asia-Pacific Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Group), with 53 member states
* the [Eastern European Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_European_Group), with 23 member states
* the [Latin American and Caribbean Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_American_and_Caribbean_Group) (GRULAC), with 33 member states
* the [Western European and Others Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_European_and_Others_Group) (WEOG), with 28 member states, plus 1 member state as observer.

Other not official Groups

The Group of 77 at the UN is a loose coalition of developing nations, designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the UN. Seventy-seven nations founded the organization, but by November 2013 the organization had since expanded to 133 member countries.

Civil Society vs. Stakeholders

1. **Q and A**

**THANK YOU**