

# Our Role at the UN

## IBVM/CJ UN NGO

*Lesson 1: Introduction to the UN*



# Background

*The United Nations is committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting human rights.*



## Secretary-General

“ In the end, it comes down to values [...] We want the world our children inherit to be defined by the values enshrined in the UN Charter: peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance and solidarity.

— António Guterres  
United Nations Secretary-General

- The UN was created in 1945 at the end of the Second World War.
- The UN Charter is its founding document.
- The UN is currently made up of 193 Member States.
  - Each Member State has one seat and vote at the General Assembly.
- The Secretary-General is Chief Administrative Officer of the UN.
- The UN is headquartered in New York City and has offices in Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and other countries.



# Purpose

*The UN allows nations to gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity.*

As laid out in Article 1 of the Charter:

- To maintain international peace and security
- To develop friendly relations among nations
- To promote social progress, better living standards and human rights
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals



© UN Photo/Rick Bajornas  
A view of the Secretariat Building, with Members States' flags flying in the foreground, at United Nations headquarters in New York



# Structure

*The UN is made up of six main bodies.*



## General Assembly

Main policy making organ of the UN composed of representatives from all Member States.



## Security Council

Responsible for maintenance of international peace and security.



## Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Responsible for discussing and debating economic, social, and environmental challenges.



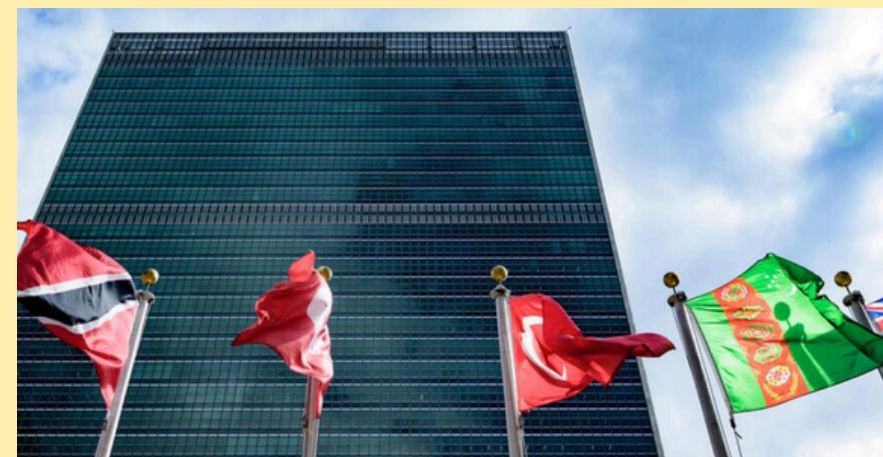
## Trusteeship Council

Established to oversee steps to prepare the Territories for self-government or independence (suspended operations since 1994).



## International Court of Justice

Responsible for settling legal disputes between States and providing advisory opinions.



## UN Secretariat

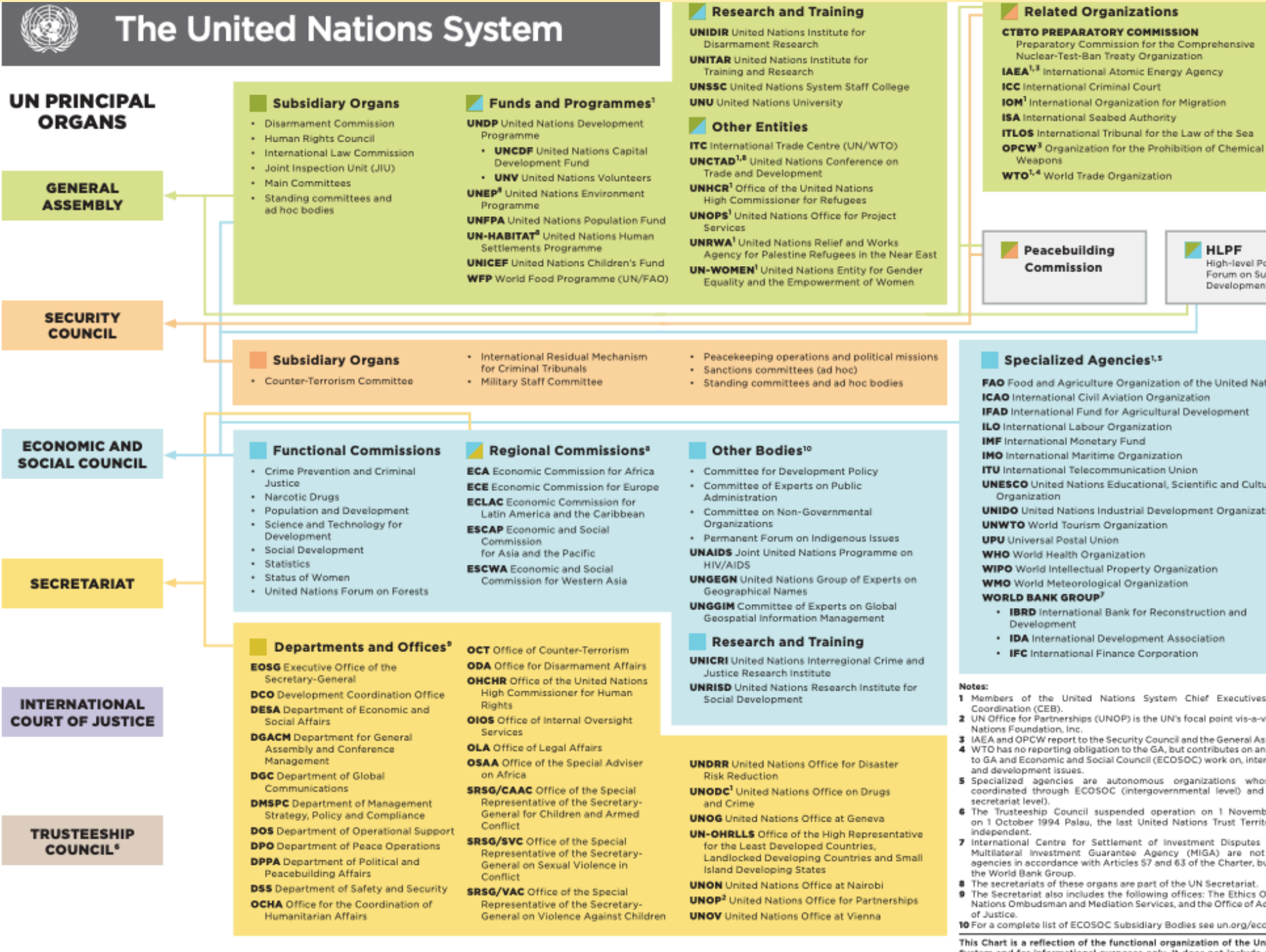
Responsible for day-to-day work of the UN and administration of UN policies and programmes.

\*All bodies are located in the New York UN Headquarters except for the International Court of Justice which is located in Geneva



# UN System Organisation

Within the main bodies of the UN, there are wide variety of organizational entities with different institutional and functional structures.



Member organs report annually to the General Assembly,

eg:

- UN Women
- UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- UN Habitat

Specialized agencies report to the Economic and Social Council,

eg:

- UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Related organizations cooperate with the UN,

eg:

- World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- International Atomic Energy Agency (ITEA)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)



# Mary Ward at the UN

*The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) and the Congregation of Jesus (CJ) work in collaboration at the UN as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO).*



IBVM/CJ delegates celebrating 20 years that  
UN for CSW68, 2024

At the UN, the IBVM/CJ NGO represent the interests of women and girls throughout our global IBVM/CJ network

## SPECIFIC AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT:

- Poverty eradication
- Gender equality
- Health and quality education for girls
- Human trafficking
- Financing for development



# NGOs at the UN

*The UN partners with civil society and non-governmental organizations to advance its ideals and support its work.*

**A CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION (CSO) OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) IS ANY NON-PROFIT, VOLUNTARY CITIZENS' GROUP WHICH IS ORGANIZED ON A LOCAL, NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

## Purpose of NGOs at the UN

*Outlined in Article 71 of the UN Charter*

- To provide the UN with valuable links to people and communities around the world.
- To raise awareness of issues that are of concern on a local and national level.
- For CSO/NGOs to carry out their activities in support of the UN Charter.
- For CSO/NGOs to hold national governments and the UN accountable.



# NGO Methods for Partnership

*There are two ways for civil society and NGOs to partner with the UN in building a better, safer and more sustainable world.*

## 1. Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Provides NGOs with access to ECOSOC  
5,593 NGOs (as of 2021)

## 2. Association with the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC)

Connects civil society organisations with the  
Department of Global Communications  
1,500 CSOs (as of 2021)

## The IBVM/CJ UN NGO has accredited DGC and ECOSOC Consultative Status

Accreditation allows NGOs to:

- Attend UN forums, conferences, commissions, briefings
- Make oral statements
- Submit written statements
- Sponsor events inside and near UN Headquarters
- Meet with diplomats
- Make formal or informal recommendations on new UN declarations and resolutions as they are being negotiated
- Submit reports and comments to review processes



# Current Representative

*There is one IBVM/CJ UN Representative who is responsible for overseeing operations from the New York office.*

**Sr Janet Palafox**

**IBVM**

IBVM/CJ UN NGO Representative  
2020-Present



## ***Responsibilities:***

- Share and promote key issues on the UN agenda with the IBVM/CJ network, especially those relating to women and girls, Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Advocate at a global level for the concerns and issues of the communities where IBVM/CJ are present.
- Provide opportunities for IBVM/CJ network to attend UN Commissions and Forums and opportunities for immersion.
- Participate in UN Forums, Commissions, Briefings, Conferences.
- Create Written and Oral Statements.
- Organise and hold Side Events.
- Collaborate with NGO Committees, Working Groups and Major Groups.
- Engage with UN member states and UN agencies for advocacy.



# Commissions, Forums & UN Days

*The IBVM/CJ UN NGO participates in many commissions, forums and UN Days.*

- The UN Days are special commemorations of particular events or topics to promote awareness and action.
- The commissions and forums are meetings held at the UN.
- During commission and forums, Member States and Civil Society share progress, injustices, and recommendations relevant to the event theme.
- As an NGO, the IBVM/CJ participates to learn, advocate and share updates with the wider IBVM/CJ network.
- See the JCoR Guide to learn more about each of the commissions and forums:  
<https://jcor2030.org/communications-guides/>





# Key Dates

*These are the main UN Commissions/Forums and UN Days followed by IBVM/CJ.*

Commissions & Forums		Days
January		World Education Day
February	Commission on Social Development (CSoCD)	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation World Day of Social Justice
March	Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)	International Women’s Day International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) Financing for Development (FfD) Spring Meetings ECOSOC Youth Forum	Earth Day



# Key Dates [cont.]

*These are the main UN Commissions/Forums and UN Days followed by IBVM/CJ.*

Commissions & Forums		Days
May	Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)	
June		Environment Day World Refugee Day
July	Higher Level Political Forum (HLPF)	World Day Against Trafficking in Persons
August		International Youth Day
September	The UN General Assembly	International Day of Peace
October		International Day of the Girl (IDG) International Day of Eradication of Poverty United Nations Day
November	Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP)	16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women (VAW)



# CSW

*Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the UN's largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment.*



- The Commission on the Status of Women first met in 1947.
- During CSW, governments, civil society, experts and activists from across the world come together to agree on actions to advance gender equality.
- In 2024, there were approximately 5000 attendees over throughout the two week session.
- CSW is one of the main events followed by IBVM/CJ UN NGO



# Suggested Activity

*This is a stretch activity for students who are interested in learning more about what IBVM/CJ does at the UN.*

- *Read the latest News Updates on the IBVM/CJ UN Website*

<https://girlsrights.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Beijing-Platform-for-Action-Youth-Translation.pdf>

- *Follow IBVM/CJ UN on Instagram*

@ibvmunngo

- *Subscribe the IBVM/CJ UN Newsletter*

<https://www.ibvmunngo.org/statements-publications/newsletter/>

- *Email the IBVM/CJ UN Representative to engage in student advocacy opportunities*



# Additional Resources

## Videos

What is the United Nations	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E67ln5yJtyE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E67ln5yJtyE</a>
Explainer: What is the UN?	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8etWR7X-RQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8etWR7X-RQ</a>
Civil Society	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6_YVsuyUEM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6_YVsuyUEM</a>
Civil Society for the Sustainable Development Goals	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9uk2BiasCE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9uk2BiasCE</a>
Behind the scenes at the Commission on the Status of Women	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdPF2ylCd9Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdPF2ylCd9Y</a>
Youth raise their voices for a gender equal future	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_OVBo_43OE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_OVBo_43OE</a>
IBVM/CJ CSW68 Province Reflections	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9N4iaCLYgY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9N4iaCLYgY</a>



Created by  
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