

United Nations



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created [UN Women](#), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The National Council of Women of Canada is an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) and is a member of the ICW (International Council of Women) which has Consultative Status (Category I) at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The NCWC has Consultative Status (Category II) at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Each year we send a delegation to the meetings of the United Nations [Commission on the Status of Women](#) in New York in March.

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Understanding the UN system

There is no quick and easy way to understand the UN system. It was formed by the victorious nations in 1945 in a bold attempt to create an international set of institutions which could help keep the peace, prevent depression and promote development for all, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, democracy, and equality

between men and women.

The UN was never meant to supplant national or local governments but to deal with problems that go beyond national borders. Only the Security Council can enforce the decisions of its members, and it is sometimes paralyzed because of the lack of agreement. Binding Treaties, found in Conventions, provide the next level of authority but there are no enforcement mechanisms. They depend for their influence on the moral pressure from peers and public pressure from the NGOs and occasionally through the media. This type of pressure is unreliable but can still be significant in “pushing the envelope” of awareness and commitment, or the reverse, in building cynicism and negativism towards the work of the UN.

The original 50 members now number 193 and the problems and international agencies to deal with them have responded in number and complexity.

In parallel to the family of UN agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World and Regional Banks, and since 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO), have developed to deal with the issues of trade, investment and finance.

A growing problem today is how these two sets of institutions relate and the problems of securing policy coherence among them.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs like the International and National Councils of Women are playing an increasing role in scrutinizing all these international bodies, in proposing improvements, and in influencing public opinion. While not elected to represent an electorate, they nonetheless provide an important voice for people who are too often not heard, and can achieve remarkable unity of purpose when they share values and common understandings of “how the world works” or “could work”. By the same token, they may find reaching consensus as difficult

as the governments do when their values and notions of “how the world works” differ.

Preamble to Charter of the United Nations...

We The Peoples of the United Nations Determine

- To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
 - To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
 - To establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
 - To promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
- And For These Ends
- To practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
 - To unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
 - To ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
 - To employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have Resolved to Combine Our Efforts To Accomplish These Aims

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

Review by NCWC and CFUW for Universal Periodic Review

Review: NCWC and CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) have jointly submitted a document in preparation for the [Universal Periodic Review](#) and [A Failing Grade On Women's Equality](#).

Reports

CSW 60 Analysis Report March 2016 : [Driving the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Analysis report by Lakshmi Puri, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women.