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Delegates to the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations convened by the UN Department of Public Information register in the lounge of the Voluntary Organizations Section at UN headquarters.
I. DPI and NGOs: A Brief History

DPI's relationship with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dates back to 1946 when a General Assembly resolution recommended that the Department:

“...actively assist and encourage national information services, educational institutions and other governmental and non-governmental organizations of all kinds interested in spreading information about the United Nations. For this and other purposes, it should operate a fully equipped reference service, brief or supply lecturers, and make available its publications, documentary films, film strips, posters and other exhibits for use by these agencies and organizations.”

Ever since then, the NGOs have continued to play a key role in bringing the work of the United Nations to people around the world. In 1968, and in accordance with Resolution 1297 (XLIV), adopted by the Economic and Social Council, the Department of Public Information (DPI) has been associating NGOs that were then expected “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.” The association of NGOs is based on their commitment to uphold the principles of the UN, support the UN’s activities and spread the word about issues on its agenda, while maintaining their independence and staying true to their own core values.

With the passage of time, the relationship between DPI and NGOs has grown stronger and more important; Member States continue to recognize the benefits of NGO participation locally, regionally and internationally, and have expressed their willingness to assist and accommodate the work of NGOs as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. Since then, NGO global involvement in international issues, consultations, policy making and conferences is much more visible, accepted and recognized.

The UN too has continued to actively engage the NGO community, and within DPI that relationship is fostered and nurtured by NGO Relations, in the Department’s Outreach Division.

NGOs and DPI have continued to work together spreading the word about the work and agenda of the UN while assisting NGOs to network globally, build their communication skills, acquire and utilize best practices, collect information, disseminate information about the UN agenda, and more effectively carry out their work. While the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) remains the only UN body with a formal framework for NGO participation, DPI provides NGOs with a wide range of information products and services that they can in turn use to enable a better understanding among their members of issues on the agenda of the United Nations. DPI also offers a unique opportunity to NGOs to be involved in the dissemination work of the Organization and have their voices heard on global issues using all forms of media and communication. Many NGOs find it enriching to their UN experience to be affiliated with both DPI and ECOSOC.

DPI-associated NGOs constitute a diverse community ranging from small NGOs to subsidiaries of large networks. They deal with a wide range of UN subjects, from disarmament and development to sustainability, women’s issues, poverty, education, trafficking of women and girls, migration, refugees,
food security and human rights, among many others. They bring passion and conviction to their work and keep the agenda of the ordinary citizen at the forefront of their information work thus ensuring that the message of the UN continues to be relevant to the poorest persons in the smallest village, wherever they may be. In 2011, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reaffirmed the conviction of the UN in the vital role of NGOs as actors on the international stage and as partners of nation states in promoting the development agenda:

“...Governments cannot do it alone. We need support from business communities, civil societies, philanthropists, and faith leaders, and we need coalitions, we need alliances, multi-stakeholder platforms. This is our business model, and we know that it works” (Remarks to Non-Governmental Organizations, UNHQ, October 2011).

This brochure is designed to familiarize NGOs with the outreach work of DPI and what association with the Department offers.
II. DPI and NGOs: An Ongoing Partnership

Once an NGO is associated with DPI, it is fully recognized within the UN system, and enjoys certain benefits.

NGOs associated with DPI would have access to the following:

- About 30 Briefings per year
- 2 Communications Workshops per year
- Annual 2-day Orientation Programme for newly associated NGOs and new NGO representatives
- A 1-day Orientation Programme for NGO Youth Representatives
- Participation in the UN DPI/NGO Conference
- Priority registration for UN DPI/NGO Conference
- Regular electronic mailings about UN events and activities
- An interactive website with up-to-date information on upcoming events, news, announcements, as well as an archive of past activities
- An online database and directory of DPI-associated NGOs
- UN grounds passes for six NGO representatives including two for NGO Youth Representatives
- The DPI/NGO Resource Centre with access to UN publications, computers, and hands-on assistance

DPI does not have funding to accommodate any requests for financial assistance by NGOs. NGOs are often referred to other sources for funding.

Thursday Briefings

DPI’s NGO Relations holds Briefings on Thursdays on topics on the UN’s agenda that are of interest to or relevant to the work of associated NGOs.

The purpose of the Thursday Briefings is to assist NGOs with their advocacy efforts on behalf of the UN. The Briefings also offer a unique opportunity to interact and network with representatives of civil society, academia, business communities, and Member States working on similar issues. The Briefings are open to all NGO representatives, who are encouraged to participate in the extensive question-and-answer segment of the Briefing.

These Briefings may take the format of a panel discussion followed by a question-and-answer session, the screening of a relevant video or film, which highlights a UN topic, or a one-on-one interactive session between a high-level UN official and the NGO community.

Summaries of each Briefing are posted on the DPI/NGO website. When webcasting of a Briefing is available, the link is also provided on the website.

NGOs are allowed to bring a limited number of guests to each Briefing. NGO representatives wishing to bring guests to a DPI/NGO Briefing need to fax or email a letter on their organization’s letterhead to the DPI/NGO Resource Centre requesting passes. This must be sent at least two days prior to the Briefing, with the following information: the name of the person, the date the pass is needed, and the reason for the request. Please note that NGO Relations will only arrange for passes to events organized by the Section.
Communications Workshops

The DPI/NGO Relations, in collaboration with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, hosts two Communications Workshops each year, one each in the fall and the spring. These workshops are meant to provide NGOs with specific skill sets that aid in the dissemination of information, focusing on subjects such as new technologies including social media, how to obtain UN news, and discovering and expanding networking opportunities for NGOs locally, regionally, and globally.

A typical Communications Workshop lasts one full workday, and is divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning meeting consists of a panel discussion followed by a question-and-answer session. The afternoon gathering is the interactive segment of the day when NGO representatives typically break into small focus groups to engage in discussion and get hands-on experience related to the morning’s theme.

Annual NGO Orientation Programme

The annual Orientation Programme is a two-day event that aims to introduce newly associated NGOs as well as recently appointed representatives of DPI-associated NGOs to the work and services offered by DPI, as well as other UN stakeholders who work with the NGO community at the UN. Orientation also serves as an opportunity for NGOs to network, share ideas with one another, and build new partnerships. Presentations cover the work of essential UN offices, DPI programmes, an introduction to the Civil Society Network (CSO Net), as well as a briefing on security and access to the UN premises. The Programme also provides the opportunity to learn about other NGOs associated with the Department, as well as opportunities for networking and sharing best practices with other NGO representatives.

Youth Orientation Programme

This one-day gathering of DPI/NGO Youth Representatives is designed to familiarize these new representatives with the numerous services and opportunities available to them as partners with DPI and the UN. The Youth Orientation Programme focuses on topics of specific interest to young people and covers similar themes as those of the NGO Orientation Programme.

UN DPI / NGO CONFERENCE

The UN DPI/NGO Conference is the premier event of the NGO year at the United Nations. It typically attracts about 1,500 representatives from over 260 NGOs representing some 70 countries. Each year, the Conference focuses on a different UN topic of interest related to the work of civil society and NGOs. This international forum also brings together senior UN System
officials, prominent international NGOs, academicians, public opinion makers and international media to discuss issues of global concern. The Conference offers NGOs an opportunity to put a global perspective on a specific issue. In recent years the focus has been on climate change, human rights, disarmament, global health, sustainability and volunteerism. The Conference is also a unique occasion for NGOs to network and share best practices at the international level. It is organized in cooperation with the NGO/DPI Executive Committee and if held outside of New York, with relevant authorities of the Host Country.

Participation in the UN DPI/NGO Conference is open to all NGOs associated with DPI and/or in consultative status with ECOSOC. NGOs not included in these groups are welcome to register for the Conference; however, they require an endorsement from a United Nations entity that is familiar with their work and can provide feedback on their eligibility.

**DPI/NGO Resource Centre**

The DPI/NGO Resource Centre serves as a repository of information about UN events, activities and campaigns available to both DPI and ECOSOC associated NGOs. Information material is for the most part free of charge for NGOs to disseminate to their constituents and associations. The Centre also serves as a place where NGO representatives can hold meetings or network.

The Centre is serviced by staff of NGO Relations, who respond to the information needs of the NGOs. The staff also sends weekly e-mail updates of announcements or events of interest to the NGO community from DPI and other UN Departments, Agencies, Funds or Programmes.

The DPI/NGO Resource Centre also provides the NGO community with the following facilities:

- An information area with publications, posters, newsletters and other printed material on the work of the UN and its various Agencies, Funds and Programmes.
- Several computers are available for the exclusive use of NGO representatives to access a wide variety of digital UN resources, as well as free WiFi.
- Networking space - NGOs are encouraged to share information by placing flyers and bulletins about their own events in the DPI/NGO Resource Centre.
- A conference room that accommodates up to 15 people which may be used for meetings and small gatherings. NGO representatives may reserve the room for official business by contacting the DPI/NGO Resource Centre.
NGO/DPI Executive Committee

NGOs associated with DPI are represented by an 18-member NGO/DPI Executive Committee which is elected yearly. This body represents the interests of DPI-associated NGOs and acts in an advisory and liaison capacity with the Department of Public Information to channel information between the NGO community and DPI’s leadership. This Committee is made up of NGOs from different parts of the world whose representatives in New York are elected for a period of two years. The Executive Committee collaborates with DPI/NGO Relations on events, programmes and initiatives of mutual interest, including the planning and organization of the UN DPI/NGO Conference.

Directory of Associated NGOs

NGOs have access to a directory of DPI-associated NGOs which can be found through the Directory link on the Membership page of the DPI/NGO Relations website. Using the Directory, NGOs may search for information on peer organizations by category and search for DPI-associated NGOs by country, region, field of work, ECOSOC Consultative Status, as well as several other options.

UN Grounds Passes

Each NGO in association with DPI can designate representatives to obtain annual UN grounds passes granting them access to the UN premises in New York and NGO events held there.

A maximum of six passes for each NGO is allowed as follows:

- a. 1 yearly grounds pass for the Head of the Organization (highest officer within the NGO)
- b. 1 yearly grounds pass for the Main Representative
- c. 1 yearly grounds pass for the 1st Alternate Representative
- d. 1 yearly grounds pass for the 2nd Alternate Representative
- e. 1 yearly grounds pass for each of 2 Youth Representatives (18-24 years old)

The work that DPI-associated NGOs carry out during the year to promote understanding of the UN and awareness of its activities is evaluated annually. This is done by reviewing the programmes, publications and, when applicable, the social media activities of each organization. Each NGO is responsible for submitting this information in an electronic report on the CSO Net, which is called the Annual Review.

The Annual Review provides an opportunity for DPI-associated NGOs to update their profiles to ensure that their information is current. It also allows each organization to (re)designate up to 6 individuals as representatives at DPI.

If the evaluation of the Annual Review submission is positive, each representative is entitled to obtain a yearly grounds pass to access the UN premises in New York as well as attend the Thursday Briefings and any other event* organized for members of civil society. Instructions on how to obtain grounds passes are sent by e-mail to each designated representative and posted on the NGO Relations website.

* While events organized at the United Nations are open to grounds pass holders, there are times when a secondary pass or ticket is required. If you are not sure whether this is the case, please check with the office organizing the event, or the DPI/NGO Resource Centre.
1959 | Four hundred representatives from non-governmental organizations met for two days at UN Headquarters. | UN Photo/MB
III. The Association Process

The United Nations is both a participant in, and a witness to, an increasingly global civil society; this dynamic relationship has become substantially more cooperative and productive over time. Indeed, more and more, NGOs are partners and valuable links with civil society as a whole. Additionally, NGOs play a key role at major United Nations conferences and are indispensable partners for the Organization’s efforts at the country level. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has noted, “By working together – NGOs, business, philanthropic groups, the United Nations and other international agencies – we can leverage our efforts and resources. Together in close coordination and cooperation, we can achieve outsized results on virtually every aspect of our shared agenda” (26 October 2011). Partnerships are essential to ensuring the continued and appreciating achievements of both the UN and the NGO community.

Association with DPI

NGOs seeking association with the Department of Public Information must meet the following criteria:
• Support and respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations
• Be a reputable NGO with national, regional or international standing
• Operate solely on a not-for-profit basis and have tax-exempt status
• Be an established NGO that has been operating for at least 2 years
• Have its own information outreach programme
• Have a satisfactory track record of past work with a UN Information Centre/Service (UNICs/UNISs), a UN Regional Information Centre (UNRIC) or other UN Agency, Fund or Programme, prior to applying for association.

How to apply for DPI/NGO association

The application process is very simple. Follow each step described in the following pages to accurately complete the application process.

Step 1: Fill out the application form which can be found on our website under “Membership”.

Step 2: Prepare the following required documents:
• A copy of your organization’s Constitution/By-laws
• Proof of non-profit/tax exempt status (only official government-issued documents will be accepted)
• A copy of your most recent audited financial statement (preferably in U.S. dollars)
• A notarized copy of the original signatures of both the Head of the NGO and the Main Representative
• 6 different samples of your organization’s most recent information materials related to the work of the United Nations (for example: newsletters, reports, audio or video productions, blogs, promotional publications and/or advertisement of events, etc.).
• 2 recommendation letters from an individual/organization and 1 recommendation letter from a UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC or a UN office with which your NGO has partnered. Recommendation letters should briefly describe your organization’s work/partnership and explain why your NGO is being recommended for association with DPI.
All submitted materials must be in one of the two working languages of the United Nations (English or French). Materials in any other language should be accompanied by a translation into English or French.

**Step 3:** Send the completed application form and all required documents to the UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC in the country where your NGO is based. For a complete listing of UNIC offices please visit: [unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/en/WhereWeWork](unic.un.org/aroundworld/unics/en/WhereWeWork)

Remember to keep a copy of all submitted documents and material for your records.

Once your application material has been received, the UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC office will evaluate your submission and prepare a recommendation letter. The recommendation letter and all required accompanying documents will then be sent to NGO Relations at UN Headquarters in New York for review and evaluation.

If your NGO meets the requirements for association, NGO Relations will prepare your application for presentation to the DPI Committee on NGOs, which will decide whether your Organization is approved for membership. This Committee meets twice a year to discuss and approve applications.

Your NGO will receive a letter informing you of the decision by the DPI Committee on NGOs on your application; the UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC office in your country/region as well as the NGO/DPI Executive Committee is also informed.

If your NGO does not meet all the requirements for association, including not having a record of collaboration with a UN office, the DPI Committee on NGOs may offer you a probationary 2-year membership or association. Probationary association status means that your NGO will have 2 years in which to establish a partnership with a relevant UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC or UN Agency, Fund or Programme. The Committee will then review your progress after 2 years and determine if you may continue being associated. All decisions on your application status will be communicated to you in writing.

**Checklist for Applications**

- Answer all questions. Do not leave any questions blank; if a question does not apply to your organization, please write “not applicable”.
- Be clear, brief and to the point.
- Remember to include all required documents and their translations. Make sure scanned documents are legible.
- Use normal characters, no UPPER CASE text, and no symbols.
- Use the correct United Nations terminology when referring to countries and territories. Please consult the UN terminology website at: unterm.un.org.
- If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact NGO Relations through its messaging system by clicking the “Contact Us” link on the home page.
Responsibilities of NGOs associated with DPI

- Raise public awareness particularly in grass root and rural communities about key issues on the UN agenda including the priorities of the UN Secretary-General and the General Assembly.
- Disseminate information and promote awareness of issues of global concern such as the Millennium Development Goals, human trafficking, climate change and vulnerable communities, HIV/AIDS, sustainable energy, violence against women, the empowerment of rural women, education of the girl child, nuclear security, disarmament and the arms trade treaty, illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, drugs and crime, among others. (This list needs to reflect current priority areas on the UN’s agenda: Post 2015 development agenda, youth, etc.)
- Design and implement public information activities and programmes including the printing and dissemination of publications promoting the work of the United Nations.
- Collaborate with UN Information Centres or Services in your geographic area or region on advocacy campaigns or other promotional public information activities.

Submit yearly an online Annual Review form through the Civil Society Organizations Network. This review is the process by which DPI-associated NGOs report on their work and public information activities in support of the United Nations by the DPI/NGO Relations.

Disassociation from DPI

NGOs may be disassociated on any of the following grounds:

- Failure to meet the criteria for association
- Failure to submit an Annual Review for three consecutive years
- Three consecutive negative evaluations of the Annual Review process
- Acts of fraud and misrepresentation of the work of the UN
- Lack of collaboration with a UN entity (including UNIC/UNIS/UNRIC)
- Unauthorized use of the UN emblem, name or flag
Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon helps students place the final touches on their disarmament statue at the 62nd UN DPI/NGO Conference in Mexico. | UN Photo
IV. Other Relationships

PI-associated NGOs have the opportunity to work with other entities, which operate at different levels within the United Nations. These include ECOSOC, the Conference on Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO), the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and other NGO liaison offices within the UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes. NGOs have steadily gained influence and importance within the UN system and now cooperate with the Organization on several different levels, depending on their field of work and interests.

ECOSOC

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the principal organ that coordinates the economic, social and related work of the 15 United Nations specialized agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions. From the beginning of the UN, ECOSOC has been the main entry point into the UN system for NGOs. ECOSOC remains the only main UN body with a formal framework for NGO participation. Since 1946, NGOs have been granted consultative status with the Council, and today more than 3,700 organizations are recognized as such. While ECOSOC has the opportunity to avail itself of valuable expertise and advice from NGOs, the NGOs in turn also have the opportunity of expressing their views and influencing the work of the Council. For instance, by having consultative status, an NGO could:

- Provide expert analysis on issues directly from experience in the field;
- Serve as an early warning agent;
- Help monitor and implement international agreements;
- Help raise public awareness of relevant issues;
- Play a major role in advancing UN goals and objectives;
- Contribute with essential information at organization events.

On the other hand, ECOSOC provides NGOs the opportunity to be heard by a truly global audience and contribute to its agenda. An NGO with consultative status can:

- Attend international conferences and events;
- Make written and oral statements at these events;
- Organize side events;
- Enter UN premises;
- Have opportunities to network and lobby.

Many NGOs enjoy association with both ECOSOC and DPI and find both of the relationships very useful and rewarding. NGOs that enjoy consultative status with ECOSOC and possess strong public information programmes are welcome to apply for association with DPI.

CONGO

The Conference on Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CONGO) is an independent, international, non-profit membership association of NGOs. It facilitates the participation of NGOs in debates and decision-making at the UN. CONGO is most active at the major UN offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna, but its work stretches out to all regions of the world.

CONGO was founded in 1948 and since then has worked to ensure that NGO voices are heard throughout the international arena. CONGO’s role in mobilizing NGOs to form the first worldwide NGO forum on human rights in 1968, as well as its role in conceiving forms of NGO participation in UN world conferences and its advocacy on behalf of NGOs at UN Headquarters highlight CONGO’s chief objectives: to ensure that NGOs are present when governments discuss issues of global concern at the United Nations and to facilitate NGO discussions on such issues.
CONGO does not take positions on substantive matters. However, it does provide, through special and ad hoc NGO Committees, fora for discussion of substantive matters by its members with officials of the UN Secretariat and UN system agencies, UN delegations and other experts.

NGOs with full CONGO membership status include national, regional and international organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC. CONGO associate membership is open to NGOs associated with the UN system but do not have ECOSOC consultative status. Members represent a large range of vital interests in areas such as human rights, gender, peace and disarmament, social justice, governance, environment and sustainable development. CONGO and its members collaborate with the larger community of NGOs through standing NGO committees, which follow issues that are of key substantive interest relative to their mandates and objectives.

NGLS

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) was established in 1975 by several UN agencies as an interagency programme to serve as an interface between the UN system and civil society. The Service aims at facilitating consistent and meaningful space for civil society participation in the inter-governmental deliberations at the UN and makes efforts to ensure that the perspectives of marginalized people and underrepresented constituencies are better heard in processes of global governance.

Drawing on its inter-agency nature and UN system-wide perspective, UN-NGLS provides strategic information, analysis and support to a wide range of constituencies, using its unique convening and networking capacity to strengthen multistakeholder dialogue and alliance-building on core UN issues. UN-NGLS also offers its expertise and support to civil society organizations (CSOs) in their work with the UN, advising organizations on opportunities to engage with the UN and facilitating their participation in various UN processes and events (conferences, hearings, workshops, etc.).

The Service closely monitors and reports on ongoing deliberations at the UN on its human rights, economic and social development, and environmental sustainability agenda, and provides accessible and concise information on these deliberations. Increasingly, NGLS features the perspectives and expert views of a wide range of stakeholders working on the above issues through interviews and opinion pieces. This information is channeled through the Service’s communication outreach products and widely circulated among civil society actors, as well as UN and diplomatic circles, through a database of over 30,000 entries.
V. Contact Us

For updated information, please visit our website at:

outreach.un.org/ngorelations

For information on specific programmes organized by our office, please contact us at:

General Inquiries
undpingo@un.org

Association
dpingo.association@un.org

Briefings
dpingo.briefings@un.org

Conference Information
outreach.un.org/ngorelations

Social Media

Facebook
fb.com/UNDPINGOsPartners4Change

Twitter
@undpingo

Blog
undpingospartners4change.tumblr.com

NGO Relations Section
Outreach Division
Department of Public Information
Unitar U-02
New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel: (212) 963-5320
Fax: (212) 963-6914

NGO Resource Centre
Tel: (212) 963-7232; 963-7233
Fax: (212) 963-2819

Participants pose for a group photo at the opening of the 62nd UN DPI/NGO Conference in Mexico City, Mexico. | UN Photo