



eurodad
european network on
debt and development

A toolkit for advocacy at the United Nations

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Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is a highly complex organisation. It can be difficult for civil society advocates to know where to start and the best way to exert any influence. This toolkit will help civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders to navigate the politics and structure of the UN system and its main decision-making bodies. It will also provide a roadmap to help guide CSOs through the main types of UN agreements and how they are negotiated, with a focus on financing for development and global economic governance, in particular relating to debt issues.

The UN's potential for making a positive impact on economic and financial justice – and the leading role it plays in shaping international relations and the future of humanity – makes it imperative for civil society organisations (CSOs) to try and influence its policy- and decision-making processes. With 193 Member States, the UN is the most inclusive of the international organisation. It is also the only international organisation that looks at economic and financial affairs through the lens of human rights, which is why we should support it.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 was a milestone in UN history, but achieving these goals by 2030 is a major challenge for the international community. At the heart of this challenge is how to finance the SDGs and how to ensure that the global financial and economic order is conducive – rather than harmful – to sustainable development.

The UN Member States hold most of the formal rights when it comes to participation in UN decision-making. However, CSOs do have some rights to participate formally in UN processes, and there are possibilities for influencing these processes informally. Moreover, they can influence their national government's position both at the UN and at home.

The toolkit modules explain the main advocacy options, and provide useful information for CSOs wanting to influence the UN as a key body to create greater financial justice.



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The UN system in a nutshell

The different UN bodies play very different roles, and understanding them is vital for an effective advocacy strategy. This section introduces the main components that make up the UN system.

The **United Nations Organisation** (UNO, or more commonly simply 'the UN') is generally the first choice for negotiating international treaties and conventions, or for making less formal agreements to regulate global affairs. Member States – or more precisely their governments and the negotiating blocs to which they belong – are by far the most important players in UN decision-making. They can be influenced at the UN, or at home.

Founded after the shocking experiences of World War II, the UN originally focused on securing peace and stability, with the UN Security Council responsible for conflict prevention and resolution. However, the UN's role soon expanded to cover other areas of vital interest for humanity, including sustainable development, economic and social affairs, human rights and gender equity, environmental protection and combating climate change.

Member States, their governments and the negotiating blocs to which they belong are the most important players in UN decision-making.

The General Assembly (GA)

This is the UN's most important body and comprises representatives of all 193 Member States, each of whom has one vote. It is in session nearly full-time each year from September to December, and convenes as required at other times.

The GA deals with issues of critical importance to the international community, for example, through high-level thematic debates chaired by the President of the General Assembly (PGA). The **role and mandate of the General Assembly** is laid down in the UN Charter.

Usually the GA strives to make decisions by unanimous consensus. If consensus is obvious, the President can propose that a resolution be adopted without a vote. If no consensus can be reached, a vote is taken. This is usually decided on a simple majority, but for some of the most important issues a two-thirds majority is required.

Except for the annual debate, Member States are represented at GA meetings by their ambassador ('Permanent Representative') or someone less senior, usually a diplomat based in the embassies ('Permanent Mission') in New York. However, smaller states often don't have the capacity to be represented at every meeting and will group together, often signing joint statements as a group of nations rather than sending a representative to every discussion.

At the start of each annual General Assembly session, Member States elect a President, 21 Vice-Presidents and the Chairs of **the GA's six committees**, which present draft resolutions and decisions for consideration to the plenary meetings of the GA. The Committees are thematically organised – the **Second Committee** leads on financing for development and other leads on social and economic affairs. The **Fifth Committee**, which deals with the UN's budget, is also relevant in the advocacy context because without budget allocation, it would be difficult for the UN to take an initiative forward.

The GA's influence over policy- and decision-making lies mainly in its soft power. The **UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)** explains in a useful guide on '**Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations**' that: "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."

In other words, getting a decision in the GA is a first and important step, but if you are striving for change in the real world, some follow up work is needed. This could include, for example, getting Member States to ratify an agreement and thereby incorporate it into national law; to make budgets available so that agreements can be implemented; or simply to create a monitoring and accountability mechanism in order to measure which country complies – and name and shame those that don't.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

This is the main body coordinating the economic and social work of the UN. ECOSOC's activities include formulating policy recommendations, conducting studies, calling for international conferences and coordinating the UN's specialised programmes. The UN's Programmes and Funds report to ECOSOC – for example, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) or the Environment Programme (UNEP). It also coordinates specialised agencies of the UN system, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The GA elects 54 Member States to serve three-year terms on ECOSOC. While seeking decisions based on consensus, each member has one vote; voting is by simple majority. Seats are allocated according to geographical representation. Each year ECOSOC members elect a Bureau, comprising a president and four vice-presidents. The day-to-day work of ECOSOC is carried out in subsidiary and related bodies, which meet at regular intervals and report back to the Council. ECOSOC itself holds a four-week substantive session each July.

Dealing as it does with social and economic issues, ECOSOC tends to be the main UN body where civil society can get involved, both formally and on the side-lines. NGOs can apply for ECOSOC accreditation, which brings certain rights, such as access to meetings and to information. Requesting ECOSOC accreditation is via the website of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (**UNDESA's NGO Branch**), but it can be time-consuming to fill in the questionnaire and submit numerous supporting documents. Applications take more than a year to be approved or rejected. Those submitted before the deadline, usually 1 June, will be considered the following year by the UN's Committee on NGOs, and ultimately by ECOSOC.

The UN Secretariat

This is the UN's executive arm, and plays an important role in setting the agenda for the UN's deliberative and decision-making bodies, and in implementing their decisions. The head of the Secretariat is the Secretary-General, appointed for a five-year, renewable term by the GA on the recommendation of the UN Security Council. The current UN Secretary General is António Guterres, a former Prime Minister of Portugal, whose term began in 2017.

The **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** is the Secretariat department responsible for development. UNDESA develops analysis, provides capacity development for Member States, and supports the work of the GA and ECOSOC. UNDESA is also responsible for ensuring and managing civil society engagement with the UN.

Of particular interest to CSOs working on development finance is the "**Financing for Development Office**," where around **20 staff** prepare the UN International Financing for Development Conferences, and monitor the implementation of political commitments made.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body of the UN, based in Geneva. It reports to the GA and ECOSOC, but has its own membership, leadership and budget. Founded in 1964, UNCTAD treats trade and finance issues from a development perspective and has traditionally worked in a complementary manner to international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and more recently the WTO.

UNCTAD is the main GA body dealing with trade, investment and development issues. Its primary objective is to formulate policies relating to all aspects of development, including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology. The physical conference meets every four years (most recently in **2016 in Nairobi**) where they approve UNCTAD's future programme of work.

UNCTAD has a strong mandate to work on debt crisis prevention and resolution, through its **Debt and Development Finance Branch**. It does so by providing research and policy analysis, through capacity development to Member States through the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) programme, by convening expert groups that formulate proposals for change, and by holding a Debt Management Conference every two years.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The **UNHRC**, whose mandate is to promote and protect all human rights, is one of the latest additions to the UN system. It was established in 2006. Its 47 members are also elected by the GA according to a regionally proportional model, including six members from Eastern Europe and seven members from the Western Europe and Others Group.

UNHRC deals with the impact of economic and financial affairs on human rights. Much work is done through **Independent Experts (IEs)**, individuals who receive their mandate from the UNHRC. These include an **IE on External Debt and Human Rights**, who is appointed for a six-year term.

The IE visits countries in debt crisis to assess the impact on human rights and the policies chosen to deal with the crisis. The IE also comments on major political developments that could have a human rights impact, for example the conduct of public and private banks. The IE can also develop guidelines to protect and promote human rights and suggest them to the UNHRC for adoption. While many of the IE's suggestions are not enforceable, they can have a substantial influence on public opinion and thus push governments to improve their policies. The IE usually works very closely with human rights groups and other NGOs, and consults civil society actors on a regular basis.

UN conferences and summits are an excellent opportunity for NGOs to engage with governments and make their case heard.

The UN World Conferences and Summits

These are highlights and milestones of the political agenda. While the UN's day-to-day work mainly involves diplomats, the conferences and summits convene governments, international institutions, NGOs and other civil society groups, and attract participants from the highest political level, including Heads of State and Government. And while much of the UN's work takes place behind the scenes, these events get extensive media coverage all over the world.

The World Conferences and Summits are therefore a great opportunity for advocacy groups to promote a new or existing issue. Recent examples include the Climate Summit in Paris, the International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and the UN's Sustainable Development Summit in New York. All of these were held in 2015 – and all of them adopted major 'outcome documents' that shaped the current international development agenda.

Member States – either individually or as part of a group – can take the political initiative and draft a resolution calling for a Summit. This resolution specifies the objectives, agenda and the preparation process of the conference, and is eventually debated, and possibly amended by the UNGA or the ECOSOC. When Member States collectively agree that an issue needs widespread political and public attention, it is finally adopted.

The Summits and Conferences provide a forum for Member States to establish internationally agreed standards to steer international, regional and national policies in the years that follow. They are where governments commit to actions and decide on changes to the international financial architecture. Part of the commitment is usually to have a 'follow-up process', including monitoring so that the parties can hold each other to account for progress (or lack of it).

They are also an excellent opportunity for NGOs to engage with governments and UN officials and make their case heard. Major conferences (and their preparatory process) usually include many formal spaces for civil participation – for example, official hearings, speaker slots at roundtable and plenary debates, or major CSO forums and side events alongside the official programme.

Programmes, funds and specialised agencies

Last but not least, there are a large number of UN programmes, funds and specialised agencies – permanent organisations with their own budgets, staff and management. Some of the better known agencies include the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Strictly speaking, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are also Specialised Agencies of the UN System, but they have a very different voting system, take their political instructions from their own boards, and do not always follow the guidance given by UNGA decisions. They are addressed in separate toolkits, which have also been produced by Eurodad.

UN decision-making and life cycle of decisions

When it comes to negotiations, all UN Member States are theoretically equal – but in practice, some are more equal than others. Some outcomes are legally binding and to some extent enforceable, while others are ‘soft law’ recommendations. Your advocacy approach will be influenced by the type of negotiation and expected outcome.

Power dynamics in the UN

Different actors in the UN pursue different interests and play different roles, but developing countries in particular value the forum that the UN offers: Article 18 of the UN Charter, which states that **each UN Member State has one vote** in the UN's General Assembly. This ‘state equality’ contrasts with the ‘one dollar-one vote’ approach at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group where richer countries have disproportionately high voting rights, and where one single Member State (the USA) has a veto – making them *de facto* unilateral organisations.

Moreover, the UN has almost universal membership, unlike other international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the G20, which are exclusive clubs of a smaller group of nations. As a result, **developing countries have a good chance to make their voices heard**, to set agendas, shape negotiations and determine outcomes, which is why the UN has become the multilateral forum of choice for developing countries to pursue their interests.

However, it is for exactly this reason that the UN often struggles to get relevant mandates. This is not so much the case on peace and security – where the five major post-war powers retain a veto over all major decisions – but on crucial financial and economic development issues. Rich countries continuously try to channel mandates to the international organisations they control: for instance, debt crisis resolution to the IMF, or global tax rules to the OECD. As a consequence, developing countries, which are poorly represented on these bodies, are severely disadvantaged. One prerequisite for achieving the SDGs in poorer countries is therefore to **get the relevant mandates to the UN**.

In addition, the UN lacks the power to enforce the implementation of agreements, whereas the IMF and World Bank, for example, have the financial muscle to enforce agreements made under their auspices. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) can impose sanctions on Member States that do not comply with WTO agreements. By contrast, the UN usually depends on the political will of Member States to ensure agreements are followed up. This is why many UN agreements remain simply unfulfilled pieces of paper, and development goals have in the past been rarely met. **Political will must be created through advocacy and public pressure on political actors.**

How negotiations are organised

Despite the many players involved – including CSOs – only governments can vote on and adopt official UN agreements. The UN strives to reach full consensus whenever possible, but if not, states can adopt a decision by vote, or enter ‘reservations’ – meaning they accept the whole agreement in principle, but distance themselves from certain elements.

All negotiations at the UN start with a **draft text** that can be prepared by the Secretariat, the chair of negotiations, a Member State or group, an individual delegate or even a specially-appointed facilitator. For Resolutions, one or several governments may sponsor a text, which is then registered and circulated by the Secretariat as an official document.

The process then moves to discussions and negotiations. **Delegations produce amendments** (additions or deletions) to reflect what they accept or reject in the first draft. The Secretariat then compiles all the different versions and produces a new draft highlighting areas of disagreement. The Chair of negotiations or the facilitator then organises **negotiating sessions** to narrow down the differences between the different delegations. During these sessions, delegations are represented by senior officials who may regularly seek guidance from their governments, thus creating an additional advocacy opportunity.

Delegations sometimes arrange informal, off-the-record sessions, also known as working groups, aimed at breaking a deadlock around contentious issues.

When negotiations near their conclusion, with just a few outstanding disagreements, delegations can trade concessions in order to reach a “balanced text” – what they consider to be an acceptable outcome. If this process is successful, the text can be adopted through a consensus. Otherwise, the Chair calls for a vote.

The role of the Bureau

Negotiating processes are usually overseen by a Bureau, which represents the five geographic UN regions through five members: the Chair, three vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur. While the role of the Bureau may vary, its skillful moderation is often crucial for successful negotiations and an experienced Chair will use different techniques to get delegations to agree on contentious issues.

The role of the Secretariat

The UN Secretariat supports all intergovernmental negotiations and decisions taking place at the UN. It provides logistical support, prepares documents, guides delegates through the rules and procedures etc. It can also convene meetings of expert groups.

Outcomes of United Nations negotiation processes

Not all UN decisions carry the same weight. This depends on what kind of document they appear in, and which body has issued them. The main ones you will come across are: Treaty, Agreement, Resolution, Protocol and Declaration. The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service maps and explains the possible outcomes of a UN negotiation process in an extra chapter of their [guide on decision making at the UN](#).

As a general rule, the more legally binding the outcome, the more difficult it is to get UN Member States to agree on it. Advocacy strategies should therefore balance the natural desire for the strongest possible outcome against the likelihood of achieving it. A legally binding outcome is usually the most effective, but the risk of negotiations failing with no outcome at all is high. The less binding agreements are easier to achieve, but they require substantial follow up work from CSOs when it comes to holding governments to account.

How does a multilateral agreement enter into force internationally?

- **Adoption:** Upon finalizing the negotiation of text, a treaty will be first “adopted”.
- **Signature:** A country begins a process of endorsing a treaty by “signing” it. This action is at times called “Signature Subject to Ratification, Acceptance or Approval”.
- **Ratification, acceptance, or approval:** Action by which a nation specifies its assent to being bound by the treaty after completion of required national constitutional procedures for ratification or accession or approval depending on the country’s legal system.
- **Entry into force:** Normally, multilateral treaties enter into force after an established period has elapsed subsequent to a set number of nations ratifying or acceding to the agreement. Some agreements have other terms that must be met so that it enters into force.
- **Accession:** This is the act by which a nation accepts to become a party to an agreement whose text has been negotiated, adopted and signed by other countries.
- **Withdrawal or denouncing:** Countries can (and do) withdraw or denounce themselves from some international agreements in accordance with the procedure set in that instruments.

Source: Felix Dodds and Jan Gustav Strandenaes (2018): How to lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings

Negotiating blocs at the UN

This section explains the different negotiating blocs at the UN. The most formal and famous ones are the developing country bloc 'G77 and China' and the EU. These groups pre-agree positions among themselves and tend to shape UN negotiations in practice, which makes them a key target for CSO advocacy. UN negotiations function in large part through negotiating blocs. These groups of countries pre-agree their positions and eventually present them as a group, with one common voice. Countries with similar characteristics often team up together.

In many areas, developing countries (the global south) share common positions, while developed countries (the global north) also share positions. The North-South antagonism in the UN is legendary. However, as both groups are in practice very heterogenous, they tend to split into sub-groups. Moreover, cross-coalitions on certain issues are always possible. UN Member States use negotiating blocs because they allow individual nations to build 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, as the groups are internally diverse, the group positions may be weak and formulated in a diplomatic and non-committal way so that all group members can sign up. It also takes a lot of time to negotiate, and often the larger groups such as the G77 or the EU have their own series of internal meetings alongside the official negotiations.

The most relevant group is the G77 and China, which strives to present the perspectives of the developing countries as a whole, although it does not consistently maintain a unified front. The second is the EU, which tends to speak with one voice. Other groups form just for the duration of a particular set of talks, or emerge over the years. In addition to negotiating independently or as part of a group, delegates also make informal alliances in the corridors, as many negotiations take place long before delegates reach the conference room.

The G77 and China (G77)

The **G77** has existed since the 1960s as a negotiating bloc. Its membership has increased to 134 nations – more than two-thirds of the 193 UN Member States. Therefore, if it comes to adoption of a UN agreement by vote, the G77 always has a majority when its ranks are closed. The Chairmanship rotates every year, and diplomats from the country that is chairing are usually the ones who present positions at UN negotiations. This makes them extremely important targets for CSO advocacy.

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

The **Least Developed Countries** (LDCs) are a sub-group of the G77. LDC has been an official category of the UN since the 1970s, and was established to raise awareness of the most disadvantaged nations of the community, with the largest development needs. Currently, 47 countries are classified as LDCs so they have a substantial number of votes in the General Assembly. In UN negotiations and debate, the LDC Group is usually very vocal on trade and aid, but also on debt issues.

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

The **Small Island Developing States** (SIDS) – another important group – face special circumstances when it comes to debt and development finance. They have a small resource base – as small and remote nations it is difficult for them to trade. Many are heavily indebted and affected by the consequences of climate change. The SIDS have formed the 37 nation-strong Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the UN.

The European Union (EU)

The largest bloc of the "global north" is the **European Union (EU)**. Its 28 Member States are all UN Member States, which gives the EU a considerable amount of votes at the UN. Moreover, it has substantial political and economic weight, if it manages to speak with one voice. The EU's foreign policy is increasingly 'unionised' since the adoption of the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties. Therefore, the common position of the EU is mostly presented by a staff member of the European Commission or the European External Action Service, or the representative of the EU Member State that currently holds the rotating Presidency of the European Council. The EU maintains a Permanent Representation in New York, in which frequent coordination meetings take place.

Single decision countries

Some countries are not formally part of any negotiating bloc. These include Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine and the USA. A single decision country has only one vote, obviously, but should still be an important target for CSO advocacy. Some single decision countries are very powerful and influential, such as the USA, and manage to shape coalitions without being supported by a formal negotiating bloc. Moreover, in many steps of the UN policy cycle, the initiative of a single country can be sufficient to take things forward, e.g. when it comes to agenda setting. Norway and Switzerland have used such spaces effectively on some occasions to "champion" policies at the UN. Occasionally, single decision countries form informal negotiating blocs such as the JUSCANZ group composed of Japan, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Shaping a joint EU position: the role of different EU institutions

This section explains how the EU develops the joint position with which it enters UN negotiations. A process that is split between the EU institutions and the UN seats in Brussels and New York/Geneva, where the permanent missions are the ones actually handling the negotiations in the UN.

The **European Commission** as *de facto* executive branch of the EU is very powerful, especially if the EU Presidency is not very dominant. This is mostly the case when it is held by a smaller EU Member State but also larger ones can be disinterested in a certain process and leave it to the Commission to drive negotiations forward. The European Commission is structured in different Directorate-Generals (DGs): The DG for Development Cooperation (DEVCO) is usually the most supportive when it comes to agreeing progressive and ambitious actions on development finance, sometimes along the lines of CSO positions. Many Finance for Development (FfD) issues, however, affect the affairs of other DGs such as ECFIN, TRADE or TAXUD. These parts of the Commission do not always consistently look through the development lens when they suggest positions, so they are sometimes more difficult to handle.

The **European Parliament** is structured in different Committees, similar to the European Commission. The Development Committee (DEVE) is in charge of development affairs, while many finance-related questions affect other committees such as ECON. The Parliament is usually a progressive player when it comes to development finance issues. It is also very open to CSOs as Parliamentarians have a special duty to interact with citizens and represent their interests.

The downside is that the European Parliament's mandate and role is limited when it comes to shaping EU policy positions at a global level. A usual activity for the Parliament is to produce a report on an issue (for example, Financing for Development) in which they outline the views that the Parliament wants the EU to take. This is non-binding, however, and is often ignored by the Commission and Council. (So much for the dire state of democracy in the EU!)

The Parliament, however, has many informal channels of power, such as influencing media and public opinion in the EU and beyond. It has hard power when it comes to the implementation of agreements made at the UN as it has (co-decision) power when it comes to legislation and budget-making in the EU. New laws and new or altered budget allocations are usually the two channels through which implementation of political agreements happens in practice.

The **European Council** as a central body representing the Member States is **involved in all stages of negotiating** the EU position for a UN conference, for example. This will be based on a proposal from the Commission. The Council has often been criticised for the way it works: it is not transparent and has few or sometimes no formal ways through which CSOs can participate. However, the Presidency often organises hearings with CSOs on behalf of the Council and, as described later, there is the opportunity to work with the Permanent Representations to the EU (known as Perm Reps).

While the EU should speak with one voice, often individual **Member States** present additional views. This is especially true of the larger countries, and the ones for whom a certain topic is of special concern. The larger ones include Germany, France and the UK, which often give separate statements in UN debates. Member States with a traditionally high interest in development finance topics are the major 'donor' countries in Scandinavia and also countries with traditional (post-colonial) ties to developing countries. Even small countries can be 'the mouse that roars' and can get leverage through the whole EU.

In capitals, CSOs have numerous ways to engage with their governments. In Brussels, they can approach their nation's **Perm Reps**. They represent their countries in the different configurations of the EU Council, where the Union's position on global affairs is prepared and negotiated. On a global level, CSOs can always approach their UN Ambassador and diplomats in New York by telephone or meet their representatives and delegations in person.

Debt crisis prevention and resolution: Relevant UN agreements

Following the global financial and economic crisis that started in 2007, the topic 'debt crisis prevention and resolution' is high on the UN agenda. Here we describe the recent key decisions made in the UN system, and how they came about.

1. The UNCTAD Principles on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing: Operationalising the co-responsibility of creditors and debtors

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Principles on Promoting Responsible Sovereign Lending and Borrowing (PRSLB) are the outcome of an expert group process that was convened and hosted by the UNCTAD. The expert group was composed of representatives of academia, experts from international organisations, and from CSOs. The mandate for this work came from the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002. Paragraph 17 of the **Monterrey Consensus** reads that "Debtors and creditors must share the responsibility for preventing and resolving unsustainable debt situations".

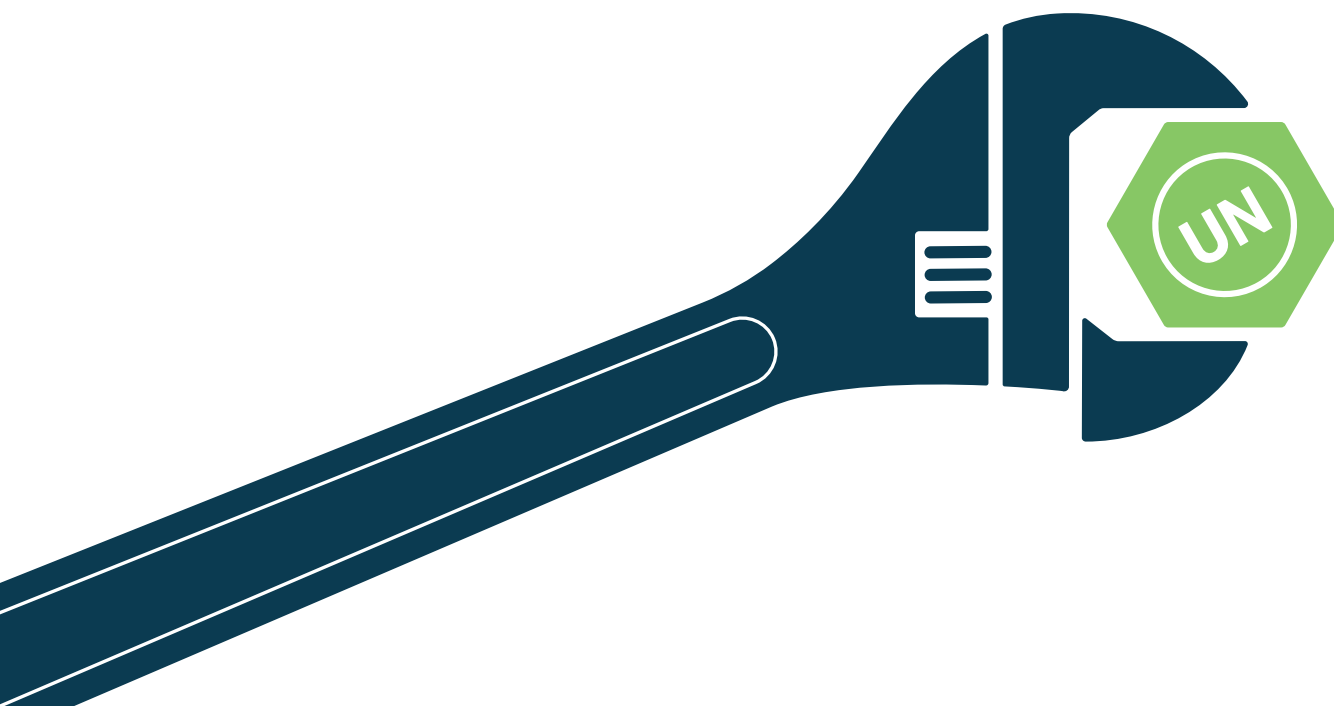
The PRSLB Principles attempt to specify how shared responsibility to resolve debt crises should look. The 15 Principles are split in a balanced way, with some principles to guide creditors' actions, others to guide debtors. They are a huge step forward when compared with the EU's 'Maastricht criteria' that solely aimed to limit the quantity of borrowing. They define a number of quality and process-related criteria, for instance around the transparency of loan contracting, the proper democratic approval of loans and impact assessments to define how loans are spent.

The PRSLP Principles got indirect adoption by governments as they feature in several UNGA Resolutions, and in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which is the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

2. The UNHRC Guiding Principles on Debt and Human Rights: The primacy of human rights over debt service

The UN Human Rights Council has adopted "Guiding Principles on Debt and Human Rights". These Principles have been developed at the request of the UN Human Rights Commission through a consultative process led by the UN's Independent Expert on debt and human rights (the full title is "Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights").

They tackle the problem that human rights agreements are often subordinated to ordinary loan contracts when governments choose how to spend public resources. In a country in debt crisis, governments often cut health and education budgets, and eventually fire teachers and shut down hospitals in order to free up money to pay creditors. The UN Guiding Principles on Debt and Human Rights build on the primacy of human rights over debt service. They clarify that international human rights law requires governments to ensure the progressive realisation of human rights, even in times of crisis, and a minimal level of economic and social rights. Governments must design budgets accordingly. The Guiding Principles have been adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (General Assembly) Resolution, by a recorded vote.



3. UNCTAD Roadmap and Guide for Sovereign Debt Workouts: Outline for a fair debt workout process

The UNCTAD Roadmap and Guide for Sovereign Debt Workouts has been developed by an expert group of academia, experts from international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The expert group met several times since 2013, commissioned research papers to inform their work, and finally released the Roadmap and Guide in 2015.

It aims to establish a new way of resolving sovereign debt crises that is fairer, faster and more effective than the usual mess we have seen in Greece and other cases recently. Building on five debt workout principles (legitimacy, impartiality, transparency, good faith and sustainability) it outlines a step-by-step approach that a heavily indebted country should take to resolve its unsustainable debt situation. It also suggests that a Debt Workout Institution is set up as part of the UN system.

The Roadmap and Guide eventually informed the work of the UN General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on a Multilateral Legal Framework for Sovereign Debt Restructurings.

4. The UN Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring: Improving debt workouts and preventing vulture fund litigation

In late 2014, the G77 set up an Ad hoc Committee on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes within the framework of the UNGA. The Committee was a response to vulture fund litigation at US courts against Argentina, which made clear that vulture funds can obstruct debt crises resolution. The issue was first discussed at the G77 Summit in Bolivia.

The idea to set up such a framework on sovereign debt restructuring was highly political from the very beginning. Several richer UN Member States, including most EU countries, boycotted the negotiation sessions, as they preferred to keep discussions on debt issues at the IMF where they have blocking minorities and can veto decisions. This led to a dispute in Brussels as the European Council decided that the EU should abstain while the European Parliament had joined CSOs calling for constructive EU participation. CSOs participated in all sessions and also wrote letters to EU governments calling – in the midst of the unresolved Euro crisis – for constructive participation of EU governments.

The G77 eventually gave up the ambition to create a multilateral legal framework in order to make adoption of a UN Resolution by unanimous consensus possible. However, even when the Resolution containing a set of Principles was ready for adoption, it had to be put to a vote. The Resolution was eventually passed by a large majority of UN Member States.

5. UN Sustainable Development Goal 17: defines debt sustainability and restructuring as means of implementation

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the **UN Sustainable Development Summit** in 2015, formally a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, with participation of Heads of States and Governments. They have previously been negotiated in a complex process that included an intergovernmental working group, and consultations of different groups including CSOs.

The 17th goal became known as the "means of implementation" goal, because it includes commitments on mobilising finance and reforming institutions that are indispensable to ensure that the previous 16 goals can be implemented in practice. As debt problems would undermine the achievement of the SDGs, it includes the sub-goal 17.4, which merges several debt-related aspects in the following text:

"Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress."

While this is obviously not much detail, the fact that these 'headlines' of debt topics are mentioned as part of the SDGs makes them an integral part of the 2030 development agenda.

6. UN Financing for Development Summit: Deal comprehensively with debt problems

Debt problems have been comprehensively dealt with in the UN's Financing for Development process. We explain in a separate chapter in detail why and how.

The 'means of implementation' goal' includes commitments on mobilising finance and reforming institutions that are indispensable to ensure that the previous 16 SDGs can be implemented in practice

The UN's Financing for Development process

This section describes the Financing for Development (FfD) process, the main norm-setting process of the UN for negotiations on finance issues, including debt. Over the past 15 years and during four global summits, a large number of related agreements have been made, including on debt issues, which are the current starting point for future CSO advocacy and therefore described here.

The first major international conference took place in Monterrey in Mexico in 2002, two years after the UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals were adopted. The intention was therefore on the one hand to put financial flesh onto the bare bones of the Millennium Declaration's ambitions. Developing countries argued that it made no sense to set ambitious development goals if the necessary finance did not come forward and the necessary institutions were not put in place. Moreover, developing countries felt that they were not adequately represented in central institutions of global economic governance such as the IMF and the World Bank which give economically stronger and richer countries more power in their decision making.

For these reasons, the FfD process found immediate and strong support amongst civil society organisations. FfD was set up as a multi-stakeholder process from the very beginning. It was never a UN-only conference but formally includes the IMF and World Bank – which is why the conferences are not called 'United Nations Conferences' but 'International Conferences'. CSOs and the private sector have certain formal and less formal ways to participate.

Since 2002, three FfD conferences have taken place. A closely related fourth conference was the **UN Conference on the World and Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development**. This was held in 2009, after the global financial crises.

Monterrey 2002 – Monterrey Consensus

The Monterrey Summit established a 'holistic approach' to development finance. The Monterrey Consensus encompasses five different sorts of finance: domestic resources, foreign private investment, international development cooperation, and external debt (understood primarily as debt relief that would free up additional domestic resources). The 'systemic issues' – reforms of the international financial and trade system – are added as a sixth pillar.

The major agreements on debt included the co-responsibility of debtors and creditors for preventing and resolving unsustainable debt situations (para 47), which eventually led to the PRSLB Principles. Then there were calls for debt cancellation to free up resources for Millennium Development Goal (MDG)-financing, which were picked up by CSOs' 'Multilateral Debt Relief Campaign' and were finally translated by the IMF and World Bank into the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative in 2005 (para 48-49). The important call to establish an "international debt workout mechanism" for the timely and efficient solutions of debt crises (para 51 and 60) was a pledge that remains unfulfilled despite the adoption of the Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring in 2015.

Doha 2008 – The Doha Declaration

The second summit, convened in 2008 in Doha in Qatar, was already heavily influenced by the global financial crisis, and by the establishment of the G20. This started to compete with the 'G193' – the United Nations – for rule-setting on development finance affairs. The Doha Summit added some commitments on climate finance as an emerging issue to the sixth pillars of the Monterrey Consensus.

In light of the crisis, the Doha Declaration called for "bold initiatives and mechanisms" to resolve debt problems (para 56), but the weak follow-up process failed to implement any of these initiatives. The failure to include all creditors in debt relief efforts and increasingly aggressive litigation by predatory vulture funds caused concern (58-63), so the UN renewed their commitment to "explore enhanced approaches of sovereign debt restructuring mechanisms" (para 67).

Addis Ababa 2015 – Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The third Summit in Addis Ababa took place in 2015. Expectations were high as the Addis Summit was the first of three major Summits that year: the Sustainable Development Summit and the Paris Climate Summit were scheduled to follow soon after. The third FfD Summit was supposed to ensure that the implementation of agreements made at the other Summits would not be constrained by financial problems. For many participants and observers, Addis was, however, a step backwards when compared with Monterrey and Doha, and implied a false start for the implementation of the UN's new 2030 development agenda. The EU negotiation position was weak as it was heavily influenced by the Union's inability to solve the Euro crisis. Negotiations on the debt chapter were overshadowed by those running in parallel at the UN General Assembly Ad hoc Committee on Sovereign Debt Restructurings.

The agreements were weak and mainly focused on data transparency issues, i.e. the reform of the debt sustainability framework of the IMF and World Bank, or the creation of a central data registry including information on debt restructurings. Addis also mandated further work on guidelines for debtor and creditor responsibilities, and a renewed but weak call for a sovereign debt workout mechanism ("improve the arrangements for ... orderly, timely and efficient restructuring that respects the principles of shared responsibility"). Debt cancellation or relief is just foreseen for countries with special needs, e.g. those affected by natural disasters, or the heavily indebted group of Small Island Development States (SIDS).

The FfD follow up processes

While the FfD Summits as such lead to substantial outcomes, their implementation in practice was, and remains, a challenge. The follow-up process at the UN itself was never fully effective. Some commitments are being picked up by other organisations with less than global membership such as the OECD or lately the G20. The Monterrey Consensus, for example, included an agreement to improve the effectiveness of aid, which was influential in setting up the OECD aid effectiveness process and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The UNCTAD developed the RSLB Principles and the G20 introduced the Operational Guidelines on Sustainable Finance, pointing at political agreements made in Monterrey and Addis Ababa, respectively.

The Annual Financing for Development Forum

In order to strengthen the implementation of Financing for Development (FfD) agenda, the UN decided at the Addis Ababa Summit to hold an Annual Financing for Development Forum every spring at the UN headquarters in New York. Their role and mandate is to set out policy guidance and recommendations to UN Member States. They can also mandate the UN Secretariat to take actions, and request or invite actions by other bodies of the UN system. The FfD forums offer a large variety of opportunities for CSOs to engage with.

Addis also mandated further work on guidelines for debtor and creditor responsibilities, and a renewed but weak call for a sovereign debt workout mechanism

CSO advocacy and participation in UN processes – a menu of options

This section describes different options for activities that CSOs can choose when they want to influence decision-making at the UN. Exactly because the UN has primarily ‘soft power’ when it comes to economic justice issues, civil society plays a key role. The UN gives many formal opportunities to CSOs and, on top of that, there are many informal ways through which CSO advocacy can have an impact.

Sovereign nation states represented by their governments are the main constituency of the UN. Only states represented by their governments can vote in the UN General Assembly, and in most other UN bodies. However, there are numerous informal and formal ways through which CSOs can influence decision-making at the UN. Civil society action is also in many ways decisive for implementation or non-implementation, as it shapes the political environment in UN Member States. As former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put it in an [address to the ECOSOC](#) “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.**”

In particular, UN work in areas relevant for sustainable development – such as poverty eradication or combating climate change – depends on civil society campaigning and advocacy. The MDGs’ implementation, for example, benefited a lot from campaigns such as the Global Call to Action against Poverty.

Over the years, the UN has created **more and more formal and informal opportunities for civil society to participate** in what was once purely ‘intergovernmental processes’. And this has had many benefits. CSOs benefit from more opportunities to make their voices heard and contribute to shaping the outcomes of political negotiations; while the relevance of the UN has also been elevated. An official [Secretary-General report](#) stated that “the engagement of civil society has clearly enhanced the legitimacy, accountability and transparency of intergovernmental decision-making.”

Two areas of particular strong civil society engagement were traditionally the negotiations that led to the SDGs and, from the very beginning of the 2000s, the UN FfD process. In both cases, progress and success depended very much on a political environment that CSOs shaped and continue to shape.

There are numerous ways for NGOs and other CSOs to participate formally in UN processes. CSOs have a right to participate in some formal ways, which was acknowledged in 1945 by the [UN Charter](#), for example, in Article 71 that calls on the ECOSOC to consult NGOs. The role of CSOs has increased ever since.

Consultative status

CSOs that want to formally participate may want to apply for consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This is often a prerequisite to get ground passes and access to events, negotiations and consultations. About **4,500 CSOs** currently have this status. Requesting ECOSOC accreditation can be done online on the website of the [UN DESA's NGO Branch](#), and the UN has also published a useful [‘Guide to Consultative Status’](#) that explains in detail how the application process works. It requires filling in a questionnaire and submitting a number of supporting documents. It also takes more than a year. Applications submitted before the deadline, usually 1 June, will be considered the following year by the UN’s Committee on NGOs, and ultimately by ECOSOC.

CSOs that do not plan to work with the UN on a permanent basis, and do not need visibility, can simply get their staff or activists ‘adopted’ into the delegation of an allied CSO that has the consultative status. Certain processes within the UN have lower bureaucratic barriers to access. The FfD-process, for example, has its own accreditation process. The UN Human Rights Council is relatively accessible, too. The UNCTAD has an [accreditation process](#) that is separate from the ECOSOC.

NGOs as stakeholders in the FfD process: participating in debates

FfD is a good example of a UN process that has a formal multi-stakeholder character. CSOs can participate formally in the annual FfD Forums. There are three 'NGO seats' equipped with microphone and a sign indicating 'NGO'. Usually, up to three NGO representatives per session can actually make an intervention of up to two minutes in length. Additional NGOs can observe the sessions in the room and can use the breaks to chat with their countries or other delegates.

The question of which CSO representatives get to speak can be a difficult one to decide. In most cases CSOs are requested to self-organise and select speakers among the group. For the FfD process, this task is done by the Addis Coordinating Group. Selection criteria include the willingness to speak, competence and knowledge on the issue discussed in a certain session, regional and gender balance, among other concerns.

Statements made in plenary (or occasionally statements made outside) can be submitted to the UN FfD office staff, who will upload them to the website together with those of governments and other stakeholders.

While NGOs have a formal opportunity to contribute to the debate, they are not on equal level with Member States. The NGO seats are usually in the back of the room, and the protocol is that the Chair calls on the Groups and Member States first to make interventions. The Chairs have a fair amount of discretion, however. The most important constraint is that not all interventions are equal when the Chairs draft the final outcome. The interventions from EU, G77 and the USA usually rank at the top; the ones from other Groups and Member States further down; and those from CSOs come somewhere near the bottom. Still, this is the main channel with which CSOs can firstly contribute directly to negotiations and debates and, secondly, make known to all Member States in the room what their positions are.

Speaking on panels

Most UN processes include policy events and interactive debates, which are kicked off by presentations of 'experts'. Experts may be academics, or staff of international organisations or governments that have something special to present (e.g. a best practice initiative), or CSO representatives.

Occasionally, the selection of NGO panel speakers is done by the CSO's own coordinating group. But more often the design of panels is carried out by the UN's own staff, in close cooperation with the Chairs and Bureau of a process. In order to get selected, it makes sense to have expertise and be renowned in a field. It won't do any harm to be well-connected with and thus known to UN staff. Where CSOs do not get (sufficient) space on panels, a letter to the Chairs or senior UN staff can sometimes influence the situation

Written submissions

Usually, UN processes are already well progressed before the actual public negotiations start. Often a 'zero draft' of the outcome document is already available at that point. Such zero drafts may have been based on submissions made by different stakeholders. And as the process continues, stakeholders can make additional submissions to comment on the zero draft, the first draft, the second and so on. In the beginning, the content of submissions can be relatively general. But as the negotiations continue and draft outcome documents become available, it makes sense to stick to the draft and make very specific track-change comments, amendments or deletions to the draft concerned, as negotiators usually go through it paragraph by paragraph.

Side-events

Organising side-events is a good option when the objective is to discuss a certain issue in more depth (e.g. debt issues), or when you want to get additional perspectives on an issue, perhaps more critical ones and more from CSOs. Most major milestones in UN processes include the possibility of organising side-events, including at the annual UN FfD Forums.

Competition is usually high, so it makes sense to have an interesting and diverse panel of distinguished speakers, or to launch a new report. It is a good idea to team up and co-organise the side-events with other CSOs and/or certain governments that you either want to influence or that are allied to your cause. Side-events need to be formally registered.

Expert groups

Occasionally, the UN sets up expert groups that are mandated to produce specific outputs, or give more general policy advice to feed into the UN's work. A few examples include the UNCTAD expert group on Debt Workout Mechanisms, the latest UNCTAD expert group on Financing for Development. UN DESA has also convened expert groups working on debt.

CSO representatives are often invited to participate in these groups, which gives them a lot of leverage to influence outcomes, and through these outcomes contribute policy content to a UN process. Most of these groups are 'by invitation only' and it is usually UN staff who decide who is invited. It helps to have the issue knowledge, and to be well known in the field and well-connected.

Informal ways of CSO influence

Approach governments

By far the most important players in UN decision-making are the governments. Some of those may be 'allies' that support your cause, and others 'blockers' that do not. Some are 'swing states' that will take a position if they become convinced to do so. It is necessary to work with all states, to strengthen those in the first group, to influence the swing states and even get a few to join the first, or at least make sure that the blockers do no harm.

There are numerous ways to work with governments involved in a UN process. Some do not require you to leave your country's capital:

- Sending lobby letters to the head of state, minister or other relevant officials.
- Organising lobby meetings with the ministry staff in charge.
- Approaching your delegation at the UN negotiating sessions, in the breaks or by setting up bilateral meetings.
- Setting up a meeting with the embassy staff in New York or Geneva.

Responsibilities within a Member State are usually split between officers in the capital and diplomats in New York. The former are more likely to have substantial knowledge on the issue; the latter are more familiar with the process and political dynamics at the UN. It makes sense to work with both. Face-to-face meetings with the diplomats require you to be in New York, where you can schedule a meeting in the embassy or at the side of UN events, in the cafés of UN headquarters or – literally – in the lobbies. Ministry officers are easier to reach for most CSO activists based at home. It is important to find out who in the ministry and embassy is in charge of your subject. You must build relations and maintain contacts.

It is always good to come well equipped with a position paper and/or a recent research report on the issues discussed, so that your 'advocacy target' understands that you know what you are talking about, and have precise change objectives that you are advocating for. This is the case when you approach governments, but also other actors such as UN staff.

Working with the UN Secretariat staff

The UN Secretariat staff, while not having a strong formal role or rights in negotiation processes, are often the ones who are 'pulling the strings' and 'holding the pen'. They prepare reports on the issues discussed; they may draft the outcome documents; they provide information on previous agreements and legal issues. They also handle accreditation, design panels and speaker lists and make 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 that these processes work smoothly. They can also be an important source of intelligence.

Working with the media

Journalists from national and international outlets cover major UN meetings. Media advocacy can be a useful strategy for mobilising public support for CSO positions, and for putting public pressure on governments and official delegations. Working with the press can mean issuing press releases at key moments, approaching journalists proactively and offering to write opinion editorials (Op-Eds) or interviews, or press conferences can be arranged. The latter is possible in UN facilities, which are also available to NGOs.

The outsider strategy: make some noise

There are numerous ways for CSOs to influence a UN process as 'insiders'. But is it often more effective to conduct an 'outsider' strategy in addition to the advocacy activities inside the building. Governments take CSOs more seriously when they understand that they can make a lot of noise in the streets and in the media if governments refuse to take their views into account. Of course, mass demonstrations have the best potential when there is a mass to mobilise. If resources are scarce, even a little photogenic stunt outside the building can impress the media as they will desperately seek photo and camera footage that is less boring than diplomats in grey suits sitting in a conference room.

Financing for Development: relevant CSO processes

This section contains very practical information about relevant CSO processes, contacts of UN staff in charge, useful sources of information.

The CSO FfD Group

CSOs have been involved in the Financing for Development (FfD) process from the very beginning. The current coordination body is simply called the CSO FfD Group. It is not a formal network with legal structure or its own budget and board. It operates informally.

The **CSO FfD group** is the main civil society body for information exchange on the UN FfD process and related issues. These include how FfD acts as a means of implementation in UN processes related to the 2030 development agenda. Its main role is to organise and coordinate CSO activities on FfD. This can include writing position papers and targeted statements, selecting speakers and allocating CSO representatives to sessions, carrying out joint evaluations of official papers and media work etc.

The steering group is the **Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group (ACG)**, formed in October 2014. It holds regular conference calls to plan strategies and actions: addiscoordinatinggroup@googlegroups.com

The **Rapid Response Group (RRG)** is the place to be for the policy geeks. This group of policy experts analyse official documents and draft CSO responses: csoffdrapidresponsegroup@googlegroups.com

The whole CSO FfD Group contains about 400 CSOs, some far more active than others. The main tool for coordination and information exchange is their listserv: global-social-economy@googlegroups.com

Currently, this group is coordinated by Stefano Prato, who works at the Society for International Development in Rome: stefanop@sidint.org

Concord Hub Financing for Development

The European NGO confederation **Concord** has devoted one of its four work areas ('hubs') to Financing for Development. Concord's working groups on FfD plays an important role when it comes to the coordination of EU CSO advocacy for major Financing for Development Summits. Between the UN Summits, Concord works mainly on one of the thematic areas of development finance (namely official development assistance) through the AidWatch Group. It also focuses on financial and political actors, with the EU as official donor and rules-setter. Other FfD issues covered to a lesser extent include tax justice and private investment. Concord's Financing for Development hub holds regular coordination meetings and maintains a listserv that is used for information sharing and coalition building.

Eurodad issue groups

Eurodad is the European CSO network specialising in development finance. Founded almost 30 years ago as an umbrella organisation of CSOs that campaign for debt relief for poorer countries, Eurodad now covers almost all FfD topics, through work areas on official development assistance (ODA), debt, private finance and tax justice.

Each of the work areas is open to all members (and occasionally non-members) and is coordinated by policy and advocacy staff based in Eurodad's Secretariat in Brussels. Each of the areas has a mailing list as a main tool for information sharing, holds conference coordination calls, and organises two strategy meetings per year.

All of Eurodad's streams come together at the Eurodad International Conference every two years, and the UN FfD process. Eurodad and its members have traditionally been one of the most important groups to provide policy expertise and content to the CSO work on FfD, and to conduct advocacy and campaigns aimed at European governments and beyond.

Thematic area	ODA
Coordinator	Polly Meeks
Email	pmeeks@eurodad.org
Thematic area	Debt
Coordinator	Mark Perera
Email	mperera@eurodad.org
Thematic area	Private Finance
Coordinator	Maria José Romero
Email	mrromero@eurodad.org
Thematic area	Tax Justice
Coordinator	Tove Ryding
Email	tryding@eurodad.org
Thematic area	Financial Reform
Coordinator (acting)	Bodo Ellmers
Email	bellmers@eurodad.org
Thematic area	Investment Treaties
Coordinator (acting)	Jeroen Kwakkenbos
Email	jkwakkenbos@eurodad.org

Key sources of information

Entity and weblink	Description
UN Financing for Development office	The place to find all relevant UN documents on FfD; Statements by stakeholders, upcoming events and some background information on the topics.
UNCTAD	The website contains information on UNCTAD's activities, such as conferences and expert groups, and a lot of good research.
UN Independent Expert on Debt and Human Rights	This is where the Independent Expert publishes reports from country visits, wider thematic reports, and information about future plans.
CSO FfD group	Comprehensive coverage of CSO engagement on FfD, including statements, position papers, blogs and reports from events.

Source	Description
World Bank: International Debt Statistics	Probably the most comprehensive public database for developing country debt, updated on an annual basis.
IMF databases: World Economic Outlook; Global Financial Stability, Fiscal Monitor; IMF lending etc.	IMF data is often more recent, and includes forward-looking projections.
Paris Club claims (Bilateral loans)	The official source for outstanding bilateral loans from Paris Club members, by debtor country.
Eurostat Government Finance and EDS Statistics	The official source for debt of EU Member States.

Qualitative information:

IMF Letters of Intent, and Memoranda of Understanding	The place to find information on IMF conditionality, but this is often hidden 'between the lines'.
IMF Article IV Consultation Reports	A regular surveillance exercise for all IMF Member States. These reports express the IMF's opinion on reforms a country should undertake.
EU Memoranda of Understanding	The place to find information on EU conditionality for countries that borrowed from the European Stability Mechanism and other EU instruments.
Citizen Debt Audit Reports	An independent perspective on debt, often carried out to assess the (il)-legitimacy of debts.
Eurodad's Development Finance Watch	Includes analysis of major debt and development finance issues from a European CSO perspective.

Key UN contacts

UN DESA: The Financing for Development Office	
Mr Navid Hanif, Director	hanif[at]un.org
Ms Shari Spiegel, Chief of Branch	spiegel[at]un.org
Mr. Oliver Schwank, Officer (debt)	schwank[at]un.org
Mr Peter Chowla, Officer (systemic issues)	chowla[at]un.org
Mr Michael Lennard, chief of Unit (tax)	taxffdooffice[at]un.org
Ms Anjali Rangaswami (CSO liaison)	rangaswami[at]un.org

UNCTAD	
Richard Kozul-Wright, Director (Globalization)	Richard.Kozul-Wright[at]unctad.org
Stephanie Blankenburg, Head of Debt and Development Finance Branch	Stephanie.Blankenburg[at]unctad.org
Dusan Zivkovic, Officer (Debt)	Dusan.Zivkovic[at]unctad.org
Daniel Munevar, Officer (Debt)	daniel.munevar[at]unctad.org

UNHRC	
Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, Independent Expert	ieforeigndebt[at]ohchr.org
Juana Sotomayor, Officer	jsotomayor[at]ohchr.org

Annex: 2018 calendar of events

Month	Day	Actor	Moment/Event	Place
April	10-11	G20	Meeting of the Development Working Group	Buenos Aires
	19-20	WB IMF	World Bank and IMF Spring Meetings	Washington
	23-26	UN	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up (FfD Forum)	New York
May	3	UN	World Press Freedom Day	Global
	14-17	UN	16th session Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters	New York
	14-23	UN	UN IE on debt and human rights: Mission to Ukraine	
June	1	UN	UN PGA High Level Event on SDG Financing	New York
	5	UN	World Environment Day	
	8-9	G7	G7 Summit	Quebec
	18-6 July	UN	Human Rights Council	Geneva
	23	UN	World Public Service Day	Global
July	9-18	UN	UN High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs	New York
September	12	UN	International Day of South-South Cooperation	Global
	15	UN	International Day of Democracy	Global
	18	UN	UNGA: start of 73rd Session	New York
	28	UN	International Day for Universal Access to Information	
		UN	Human Rights Council	Geneva
October	12-14	WB IMF	2018 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group	Bali
	17	UN	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	
	22-25	UNCTAD	World Investment Forum	Geneva
	24	UN	UN Day	
	24	UN	World Development Information Day	
November	30 Nov-1 Dec	G20	G20 Summit	Buenos Aires
December	3-14	UN	UN Climate Summit COP 24	Katowice



The United Nations System



UN Principal Organs

General Assembly

Security Council

Economic and Social Council

Secretariat

International Court of Justice

Trusteeship Council⁶

Subsidiary Organs
Main and other sessional committees
Disarmament Commission
Human Rights Council
International Law Commission
Standing committees and ad hoc bodies

Funds and Programmes¹

- UNDP** United Nations Development Programme
- UNGDF** United Nations Capital Development Fund
- UNV** United Nations Volunteers
- UNEP**⁸ United Nations Environment Programme
- UNFPA** United Nations Population Fund
- UN-HABITAT**⁸ United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- UNICEF** United Nations Children's Fund
- WFP** World Food Programme (UN/FAO)

Research and Training

- UNIDIR** United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
- UNITAR** United Nations Institute for Training and Research
- UNSSC** United Nations System Staff College
- UNU** United Nations University

Other Entities

- ITC** International Trade Centre (UN/WTO)
- UNCTAD**^{1,8} United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- UNHCR**¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNOPS** United Nations Office for Project Services
- UNRWA**¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
- UN-Women**¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Related Organizations

- CTBTO Preparatory Commission** Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
- IAEA**^{1,3} International Atomic Energy Agency
- ICC** International Criminal Court
- ISA** International Seabed Authority
- ITLOS** International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- OPCW**⁵ Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- WTO**^{1,4} World Trade Organization

Subsidiary Organs
Counter-terrorism committees
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT)
Military Staff Committee

Peacekeeping operations and political missions
Sanctions committees (ad hoc)
Standing committees and ad hoc bodies

Advisory Subsidiary Body

Peacebuilding Commission

HLPF High-level Political Forum on sustainable development

Functional Commissions

- Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Narcotic Drugs
- Population and Development
- Science and Technology for Development
- Social Development
- Statistics
- Status of Women
- United Nations Forum on Forests

Regional Commissions⁸

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

Other Bodies

- Committee for Development Policy
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- UNAIDS** Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
- UNGEI** United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Research and Training

- UNICRI** United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
- UNIRISD** United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Departments and Offices

- EOSSG** Executive Office of the Secretary-General
- DESA** Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- DFS** Department of Field Support
- DGACM** Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
- DM** Department of Management
- DPA** Department of Political Affairs
- DPI** Department of Public Information
- DPKO** Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- DSS** Department of Safety and Security
- OCHA** Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OIOS

Office of Internal Oversight Services

OLA

Office of Legal Affairs

OSAA

Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

PBSO

Peacebuilding Support Office

SRSG/CAAC

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

SRSG/SVC

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

UNISDR

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNODAC

United Nations Office for Drug and Crime

UNOG

United Nations Office at Geneva

UN-OHRLS

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

UNON

United Nations Office at Nairobi

UNOP²

United Nations Office for Partnerships

UNOVO

United Nations Office at Vienna

Specialized Agencies^{1,5}

- FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- ICAO** International Civil Aviation Organization
- IFAD** International Fund for Agricultural Development
- ILO** International Labour Organization
- IMF** International Monetary Fund
- IMO** International Maritime Organization
- ITU** International Telecommunication Union
- UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNIDO

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNWTO

World Tourism Organization

UPU

Universal Postal Union

WHO

World Health Organization

WIPO

World Intellectual Property Organization

WMO

World Meteorological Organization

World Bank Group⁷

- IBRD** International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- IDA** International Development Association
- IFC** International Finance Corporation

Notes:

- All members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
- UN Office for Partnerships (UNOP) is the UN's focal point vis-à-vis the United Nations Foundation, Inc.
- IAEA and OPCW report to the Security Council and the GA.
- WTO has no reporting obligation to the GA, but contributes, on an ad hoc basis to GA and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) work on, inter alia, finances and development issues.
- Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations whose work is coordinated through ECOSOC (intergovernmental level) and CEB (inter-secretariat level).
- The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, as on 1 October 1994 Palau, the last United Nations Trust Territory, became independent.
- International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are not specialized agencies, but are part of the World Bank Group in accordance with Article 57 and 65 of the Charter.
- The secretariats of these organs are part of the UN Secretariat.

This Chart is a reflection of the functional organization of the United Nations System and for informational purposes only. It does not include all offices or entities of the United Nations System.

Eurodad

The European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad) is a network of 46 civil society organisations (CSOs) from 19 European countries, which works for transformative yet specific changes to global and European policies, institutions, rules and structures to ensure a democratically controlled, environmentally sustainable financial and economic system that works to eradicate poverty and ensure human rights for all.

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