



# Institutional arrangements for governance, oversight and evaluation in the UN

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## Governing bodies

### The main or principal organs

There are four main or principal organs of the UN system that have governing powers, these are:

- a. The General Assembly (GA) - the UN's central deliberative body empowered to discuss and make recommendations on any subject within the scope of the UN Charter.
- b. The Security Council (SC) - primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
- c. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - responsible for organizing the UN's work on economic and social matters and promotion of human rights.
- d. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) - the principal judicial organ of the UN.

Of these, the GA is the primary governing body, while the SC, ECOSOC and the ICJ have designated areas of responsibilities and authority. The Secretariat, which is the administrative arm of the UN, is governed by the GA.

### The subsidiary organs

Three of the main organs – the GA, SC and ECOSOC, are empowered by the UN Charter to establish subsidiary organs as necessary to help perform their functions. The subsidiary bodies fluctuate in number from year to year, according to the changing requirements of the main organ concerned. Some of the subsidiary organs in turn set up their own subsidiary units—working groups, subcommittees, and the like.

#### ***Subsidiary organs of the GA***

The General Assembly's subsidiary organs range in complexity and status from temporary committees to semi-autonomous institutions that maintain their own secretariats or administrative departments. The main committees comprise representatives of all member states and are formally reconstituted at each regular General Assembly session to discuss the various items on the agenda for that year.

The main committees are:

- a. The First Committee: Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)
- b. The Second Committee: Economic and Financial (ECOFIN)
- c. The Third Committee: Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian (SOCHUM)
- d. The Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL)

- e. The Fifth Committee: Administrative and Budgetary
- f. The Sixth Committee: Legal

There are many standing committees, ad hoc bodies, and other subsidiary organs and related bodies. Two of the more important of these (in relation in evaluation for the Secretariat programmes) are:

- a. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), a 16-member expert committee which reviews the budgets submitted by the Secretary-General;
- b. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), a 34-member committee, that reviews the programmatic aspects of the Secretary-General's budget, which also reports to the ECOSOC.

### ***Subsidiary organs of the SC***

Subsidiary organs of the SC includes - The Military Staff Committee, the Committee of Experts on Rules of Procedure and the Committee on Admission of New Members. Additionally, there are various ad hoc committees, established as needed; these comprise all council members and meet in closed session.<sup>12</sup> The Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the charter, which deals with "action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression," also sets up committees to monitor compliance by member states with its resolutions.

### ***Subsidiary organs of the ECOSOC***

There are four types of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council:

- a. The semiautonomous bodies that govern various programs and funds of the UN; i.e. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, etc.
- b. The regional commissions – ECE, ESCAP, ESCWA, ECA, ECLAC.
- c. The functional commissions; including the commissions for statistics, population and development, social development, human rights, status of women, narcotics drugs, science and technology for development, crime prevention and criminal justice, and sustainable development.
- d. Several sessional, standing and ad hoc committees, that often report to both the GA and to the ECOSOC. These include – the committees on human settlements, NGOs, negotiations on intergovernmental agencies, development policy, economic, social and cultural rights, energy and natural resources for development, indigenous issues, etc.

## Executive Boards of Specialized Agencies and Research and Training Institutes

The UN Specialized agencies are separate, legally autonomous organizations with their own policy-making and executive organs, secretariats, and budgets. The precise nature of their relationship with the UN is defined by the terms of special agreements that were established with the ECOSOC and subsequently approved by the GA, as provided for in Article 63 of the charter. Since Article 63 also empowers the ECOSOC to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation and recommendations, they are required to report annually to it.

There are several research and training institutions created under the framework of the UN, most of which are separate, autonomous organizations. Some are governed by subsidiary organs of the GA or ECOSOC and some are governed by their own policy-making and executive organs. The majority rely primarily on voluntary funds, though some receive funding from the UN.

## Administrative and operational bodies of the UN system

### The UN Secretariat programmes

The UN Secretariat is the primary administrative arm of the UN. It is governed by the GA and managed by the Secretary-General, with assistance of the DSG. The activities of the UN Secretariat are organized as “programmes”. To date, there are 28 discrete programmes (See Annex 2), and these include the regional commissions, subsidiary organs, as well as some funds and programmes. (See below) Most Secretariat programmes are governed directly by the GA through its main committees, whilst some are governed by other subsidiary organs of the GA or ECOSOC. The activities of the UN Secretariat are funded partly by assessed contributions of the UN Member States, and partly by voluntary contributions. These programmes are managed by Directors at the Under Secretary-General level (USG).

### The UN funds and programmes

The UN Funds and Programmes were created by the UN to meet needs not envisaged at its creation, such as Palestine refugees, development assistance, food aid, or the environment. They are subordinate to the UN; *i.e.* the GA, but since they are immediately controlled by distinct inter-governmental bodies and derive most of their financial resources from other sources than the UN regular budgets, they are somewhat more akin to specialized agencies than to “subsidiary organs” such as UN commissions and committees. Moreover, as their activities are more operational and carried out at field level, they have needs dictated by an environment quite different from that of headquarters-centered administrations. The Programmes and Funds apply UN rules and regulations in the realm of administration and personnel. Of the ten UN funds and programmes, six are considered part of the Secretariat - UNHCR, UNRWA, UNEP, UNODC, UNCTAD, and UN-HABITAT, while the remaining four are more autonomous - UNDP (which includes the associated funds and programmes of UNIFEM, UNCDF and UNV), UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP.

## **Specialized Agencies and Research and Training Institutions**

The UN Specialized agencies are separate, legally autonomous organizations with their own policy-making and executive organs, secretariats, and budgets. These agencies were brought into relationship with the UN through negotiated agreements. Some of the agencies existed before the First World War, some were associated with the League of Nations, others were created almost simultaneously with the UN and yet others were created by the UN itself to meet emerging needs. Given the diversity of their respective fields of action, history and experience, each agency has its own needs and concerns, not to speak of "corporate culture".

## **Management and coordinating bodies of the UN system**

### **The office of the Secretary General (SG)**

The SG is the chief administrative officer of the UN. In the management of the Secretariat, he is assisted by a Deputy Secretary General. To support his overall management of the UN system, there is a Senior Management Group, which is a committee of senior UN managers that serves as the Secretary-General's cabinet and the central policy planning body of the United Nations. Its objective is to ensure strategic coherence and direction in the work of the Organization.

### **The Chief Executives**

The UN operational and administrative bodies; *i.e.* the UN Secretariat programmes, the UN Funds and Programmes, and the Specialized Agencies and Research and Training Institutions, are managed by Chief Executives (typically at the Under Secretary-General level). In larger organizations, the Chief Executives are assisted by a Deputy and a senior management team.

### **The Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination**

The Chief Executives Board (CEB) for Coordination, formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), was established by ECOSOC in 1946. It is composed of the Secretary-General and the executive heads of UN member organizations (See Annex 1) and is assisted by two high-level committees, the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). Its purpose is to promote cooperation on all of the substantive and management issues facing the UN system.

### **Thematic coordinating bodies**

In addition to the CEB, other system-wide coordinating and policy setting bodies are – the Executive Committee for Peace and Security (ECPS), the UN Development Group (UNDG), the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA), and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (IASC).