

NGO Association with DPI/UN

About NGO Association with the UN

Non-governmental organizations have been partners of the Department of Public Information (DPI) since its establishment in 1947. Official relationships between DPI and NGOs date back to 1968. The Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1297 called on DPI to associate NGOs with effective information programmes in place and thus disseminate information about issues on the UN's agenda and the work of the Organization. Through associated NGOs DPI seeks to reach people around the world and help them better understand the work and aims of the United Nations.

NGO Relations is part of the DPI's Outreach Division and acts as its liaison between the United Nations and NGOs and other civil society organizations. It oversees partnerships with associated NGOs and provides a wide range of information services to them. These include weekly NGO briefings, communication workshops, an annual NGO conference and an annual orientation programme for newly associated NGOs.

Currently there are 1549 NGOs with strong information programmes associated with DPI out of which 728 are also associated with ECOSOC. While consultative status with ECOSOC may be obtained by NGOs whose work covers issues on the agenda of ECOSOC, association with DPI also requires having effective information programmes in place and the ability and means to disseminate information about the work of the United Nations.

What is an NGO?

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a not-for-profit, voluntary citizens' group, which is organized on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good. Task-oriented and made up of people with common interests, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to governments, monitor policy and programme implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international agreements. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment or health. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations (UN) system differs depending on their location and their mandate.

The DPI/NGO Partnership

Some of the benefits and services provided to NGOs are listed below:

- attendance at the annual DPI/NGO Conference (three-day event)
- annual grounds passes for access to the United Nations premises to up to three representatives of associated NGOs
- regular mailings of United Nations information materials, including UN system information materials (e-mail and hard copy)
- directory of associated NGOs (online and hard copy)
- website with information on past and upcoming events, news and other relevant issues and services
- weekly NGO Briefings (in New York)
- Communications Workshops (held in New York, one-day event three times a year)
- Annual Orientation Programme for newly associated NGOs (one two-day event, held in New York)
- through the NGO Resource Center (based in New York), NGO representatives have access to:
 - UN documents and UN system publications, etc.
 - A video lending library

Criteria for Association with DPI

- The NGO must support and respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations;
- Must be of recognized national or international standing;
- Should operate solely on a not-for-profit basis and have tax-exempt status;
- Must have the commitment and the means to conduct effective information programmes with its constituents and to a broader audience about UN activities by publishing newsletters, bulletins and pamphlets; organizing conferences, seminars and round tables; or enlisting the attention of the media;
- Should preferably have a satisfactory record of collaboration with UN Information Centres/Services or other parts of the UN System prior to association.
- Please note that in cases where the NGO has no record of collaboration but the DPI Committee on NGOs approves its applications, it will have a provisional association status of two years until which it can establish a partnership with the relevant UNICs/UNISs or UN system organization;
- The NGO should provide an audited annual financial statement, indicated in US currency, and conducted by a qualified, independent accountant;
- The NGO should have statutes/bylaws providing for a transparent process of taking decisions, elections of officers and members of the Board of Directors.
- Should have an established record of continuity of work for a minimum of three years and should show promise of sustained activity in the future.

A. Evaluation and review process:

Associated NGOs undergo a specifically designed evaluation and review process.

1. The DPI Committee on NGOs, which decides on association and disassociation, meets twice a year, in June/July and December. The Committee reviews new association applications and decides on the status of currently associated NGOs that do not meet the criteria.
2. Every year associated NGOs are required to submit one document that will consist of:
 - a completed evaluation area of UN-related activities, with at least three (3) samples of materials of those activities.
 - an accreditation area with the updated information of the NGO and its representatives

Please note that association of NGOs with DPI does not constitute their incorporation into the United Nations system, nor does it entitle associated organizations or their staff to any kind of privileges, immunities or special status.

B. Grounds for disassociation include:

- failure to submit an accreditation form **every year** and an evaluation form **every four years**
- failure to meet criteria for association
- misrepresentation and fraud
- unsatisfactory collaboration with United Nations system organizations
- unauthorized use of the United Nations logo

Application Procedure

Please note: To ensure consideration in time for the 2010 Conference, NGOs should submit their applications to their local UNIC no later than 30 April 2010.

Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island NGOs should also read “DPI Association notes for AU and NZ”, which provides advice specific to the region, prior to completing their application. Ideally, applications should be sent in PDF format via email. These should be sent to:

unic.canberra@unic.org

Effective **1 January 2009**, DPI decided to launch a campaign with the aim of achieving greater geographical diversity among the NGOs associated with DPI. Priority for 2010 will be given to NGOs from the Asia and Pacific region.

A. NGOs who are currently NOT associated with DPI:

The association process takes three to six months. The DPI Committee on NGOs that decides on association and disassociation meets twice a year, in June/July and December. Interested NGOs that meet the criteria should follow the steps below:

1. Find the UN Information Centre (UNIC) covering the country where your NGO is based. The application for association has to be sent to the UNIC directly. A list of UNICs can be found on the UN Website: (<http://unic.un.org/factsheet/Default.aspx>)
2. The required application materials for association with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) are:
 - A completed Application Form for Non-Governmental Organizations
 - A copy of the organization's constitution/charter or by-laws
 - Official proof of non-profit status, issued by public authorities, and tax exemption status (*Note: The document should be on official letterhead and dated.*)
 - A copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statement, conducted by a qualified and independent accountant (*Must be in U.S. dollars*).
 - Evidence of an active information programme relevant to the United Nations: at least six (6) different types of samples of the organization's most recent information materials (e.g. newsletter, periodicals, tapes of radio or television programmes, conference reports) (*Note: Electronic materials, such as Web sites or periodicals, should be sent in hard copy form.*)
 - Two (2) letters of recommendation of organizations (*UN or others*)
 - A notarized Certification of Signatures of the NGO President or Chief Administrative Officer and the main Representative)
 - References

(Note: All items on the list above are required for a more mutually beneficial facilitation of the Association Process. Also, all submitted materials must be in English or French, the two working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. Material in any other language should be accompanied by an unofficial translation into either of these two languages.)

3. Once all the required materials are received and all the documents are in order, the UNIC will evaluate them. It will then make a recommendation to NGO Relations which will inform the NGO of the approximate date the DPI Committee on NGOs will meet to review applications. Please note that the UNIC's role to recommend an NGO does not guarantee approval by the Committee.
4. The NGOs will be notified of the results of the Committee meeting.
5. Provided the NGO has been granted the association status, it will receive an accreditation form, which must be filled out and returned to NGO Relations. The NGO may designate 3 persons to represent them at UN Headquarters. Each representative is entitled to an annual UN grounds pass.

B. Already associated NGOs

Every year, the associated NGOs need to renew their United Nations photo grounds passes which allow them access to UN Headquarters. The new accreditation form is mailed to them at the end of each calendar year and is also available [online](#). NGOs have to fill out the accreditation form in order to update their information and remain in good standing. The NGOs need to return the form to NGO Relations by fax to +1-212-963-2819. After the form is processed, the United Nations photo grounds passes will be issued by the UN Pass and ID Office. The pass must be obtained in person from the Pass and ID Office on First Avenue at 45th Street, 1st floor, from Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (Tel: +1-212-963-7533).