Civil Society

**Civil society.** Refers to the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector). Of particular relevance to the United Nations are mass organizations (such as organizations of peasants, women or retired people), trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people’s organizations, religious and spiritual organizations, academe and public benefit non-governmental organizations.

A/58/817 (11 June 2004): We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance; Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations (Glossary, page 13)

**UN Entities**

- **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**
  - Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISH) – Civil Society: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/civil-society.html](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/civil-society.html)
- **UN Department of Global Communications (DGC)**
  - NGO Directory: [https://un4.me/2CUvn8J](https://un4.me/2CUvn8J)
  - UN Academic Impact: [https://academicimpact.un.org/](https://academicimpact.un.org/)
  - Non-Governmental Liaison Service (formerly UN-NGLS) has joint DGC: [https://un4.me/2tx8gR6](https://un4.me/2tx8gR6)
- **Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – Civil Society:** [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx)
- **International Monetary Fund - Civil Society and the IMF:** [https://www.imf.org/en/About/Partners/civil-society](https://www.imf.org/en/About/Partners/civil-society)
- **UN Women – UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – Civil Society:** [http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/civil-society](http://www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/civil-society)
- **UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – Civil society partnership:** [http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/](http://www.unicef.org/about/partnerships/)
- **UN Conference on Trade and Development – UNCTAD and Civil Society:** [https://un4.me/29fs63k](https://un4.me/29fs63k)
- **UN Development Programme – UNDP & Civil Society:** [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/partners/civil_society_organizations.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/partners/civil_society_organizations.html)
- **UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Non-governmental Organizations:** [http://en.unesco.org/partnerships/non-governmental-organizations](http://en.unesco.org/partnerships/non-governmental-organizations)
- **UN Environment – Civil Society Engagement:** [https://www.unenvironment.org/civil-society-engagement](https://www.unenvironment.org/civil-society-engagement)
• UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) – Our Partners – NGOs & CBOs: https://unhabitat.org/our-partners/
• United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) - Governance, Civil Society & Participation: https://un4.me/29mFt3W
• World Bank and Civil Society: http://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society
• World Health Organization (WHO) - Civil Society: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/themes/civilsociety/en/

Selected UN documents

• Further UN documents on the topic “Civil Society” – click here

Selected Publications available online

• OHCHR Publications: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ABOUTUS/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx
• UNDP Publications: https://un4.me/2GefrjS

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https://unric.org/en/unric-library-backgrounder-civil-society/