

## **UN SUBDIVISIONS**

### **HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

The United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) is an international body within the United Nations system. Its stated purpose is to address human rights violations. The Council is the successor to the HRC, which was often criticized for the high-profile positions it gave to member states that did not guarantee the human rights of their own citizens.

The United Nations General Assembly established the HRC on 15 March 2006 by a vote which was opposed only by United States, Marshall Islands and Palau (bound to the United States through Compacts of Free Association), and Israel. The main objection to the Council was the lack of safeguards to keep states that continually violate human rights off the council.

The 47-seat HRC replaced the former 53-member Commission on Human Rights. The Commission was an independent body, but the Council has been elevated to the status of a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. The 47 seats in the Council are distributed among the United Nation's regional groups as follows: 13 for Africa, 13 for Asia, 6 for Eastern Europe, 8 for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7 for the Western European and Others Group.

In an attempt to remedy problems of the former Commission, which was criticized among other actions for the election of Libya to its chairmanship in 2003, the resolution establishing the Council specified that "members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights" and will be subject to periodic review. Each member nation of the Council must be approved individually and directly by a majority (96 of 191) of the members of the General Assembly, in a secret ballot. Council membership is limited to two consecutive terms, and any Council member may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly.

### **HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is a United Nations agency that works to promote and protect the human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The United Nations General Assembly established the office in 1993. Holding the rank of Under-Secretary-General, the High Commissioner coordinates human rights activities throughout the United Nations. System and supervises the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

The mandate of the OHCHR derives from Articles 1, 13 and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action and General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, by which the Assembly established the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The tasks of the Office of OHCHR are listed below:

1. Promotes universal enjoyment of all human rights by giving practical effect to the will and resolve of the world community as expressed by the United Nations;

2. Plays the leading role on human rights issues and emphasizes the importance of human rights at the international and national levels;
3. Promotes international cooperation for human rights;
4. Stimulates and coordinates action for human rights throughout the United Nations system;
5. Promotes universal ratification and implementation of international standards;
6. Assists in the development of new norms;
7. Supports human rights organs and treaty monitoring bodies;
8. Responds to serious violations of human rights;
9. Undertakes preventive human rights action;
10. Promotes the establishment of national human rights infrastructures;
11. Undertakes human rights field activities and operations; and
12. Provides education, information advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights.

### **HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), established December 14, 1950, protects and supports refugees at the request of a government or the United Nations and assists in their return or resettlement. The agency is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. UNHCR presently has major missions in Lebanon, South Sudan, Chad/Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan as well as Kenya to assist and provide services to IDPs and refugees.

### **WORLD FOOD PROGRAM**

The World Food Program (WFP) is the food aid branch of the United Nations, and the world's largest humanitarian agency. WFP provides food, on average, to 90 million people per year, 58 million of whom are children. From its headquarters in Rome and more than 80 country offices around the world, WFP works to help people who are unable to produce or obtain enough food for themselves and their families. Part of WFP aid provides crucial food aid to refugees and displaced persons in areas of crisis. WFP operations are funded by donations from world governments, corporations and private donors.

### **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations' global development network, is the largest multilateral source of development assistance in the world. The UNDP is an executive board within the United Nations General Assembly. The UNDP Administrator is the third highest ranking member of the United Nations after the United Nations Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General. UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member nations. The organization has country offices in 166 countries, where it works with local governments to meet development challenges and develop local capacity. UNDP provides

expert advice, training, and grant support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries. The UNDP plays a crucial role in helping promote development during and after United Nations peacekeeping missions.

### **OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is a United Nations body formed in December 1991 by General Assembly Resolution 46/182. The resolution was designed to strengthen the United Nations' response to complex emergencies and natural disasters by creating the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and replacing the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, which had been formed in 1972. The OCHA was designed to be the United Nations focal point on major disasters. Its mandate was also expanded to include the coordination of humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy. OCHA is headed by the Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

### **UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

The United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is a department of the Secretariat of the United Nations, was established in 1992, whose focal point is Peace Building. The DPA is tasked with resolving ongoing conflict, preventing new problems from arising and promoting peace in areas that have recently emerged from conflict. To achieve these, the department has four main responsibilities. First, the department is responsible with the monitoring and assessment of developments in the political sphere. Second, the DPA reports and advises the Secretary General in relation to the promotion of peace. Third, the department provides to member states assistance for elections. Finally, the DPA provides advice to the Security Council.

### **UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is a department of the United Nations which is charged with the planning, preparation, management and direction of UN peacekeeping operations. The official DPKO was created in 1992, before which the duties of the DPKO had been distributed throughout the United Nations Office of Special Political Affairs.

DPKO is split into two main offices: the Office of Operations and the Office of Mission Support. Included within the Office of Mission Support are the logistics and administrative divisions, which provide logistics, personnel, and financial support services to DPKO missions. The Office of Mission Support OMS is responsible for determining financial reimbursement to United Nations member states for their contribution of Contingent owned equipment, troops, and services to peacekeeping missions. Also apart of DPKO are Mine Action, Training, Best Practices, and Military and Police Divisions. The DPKO also plays a crucial role in advising both the Secretary General and the Security Council during the planning and implementation phases of peacekeeping operations.

## **UNITED NATIONS PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION**

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is a subsidiary organ of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. The main task of the new PBC is that of taking care of post-conflict actions to be adopted and enforced in countries emerging from conflicts, whose Governments choose to ask for relief from the International Community. It is up to the PBC to collect all available resources and funds directed to support recovery projects in those countries, and to draft long-term strategies in order to guarantee reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development. Specifically, the PBC will:

- Propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery;
- Help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities and sustained financial investment over the medium- to longer-term.
- Extend the period of attention by the international community to post-conflict recovery;
- Develop best practices on issues that require extensive collaboration among political, military, humanitarian and development actors.

This new body represents an innovation to the UN traditional approach to conflicts situations: for the first time there is a single organ charged with a mission that relies on a complex of capacities and expertise which used to be of many UN subjects' concern, without any substantial coordination set out. For this reason the PBC can benefit by all the UN experience on such matters as conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, respect for human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and long-term development.

The PBC is an advisory body, its role being proposing action patterns to be followed from the countries involved in the peace-building operations, and it is not entitled to take effective action. Another important task the PBC is supposed to fulfill is the one of ensuring actual funding both for early reconstruction activities and for longer-term strategies. This last mission is aimed at fixing the previous general established practice, according to which Countries were often more dispositive to engage themselves to offer resources for short-term interventions (mainly devoted to peace-keeping operations) than to keep their promises of supporting peace-building operations once the conflict had been soothed and the hype on it had ceased to affect international public opinion.

Funding for the application of the PBC suggestions comes from the Peacebuilding Fund, a multi-year standing trust fund for post-conflict peacebuilding, established in 2006 with a target funding level of \$250 million.

## **INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN). The IAEA is not under direct control of any United Nations body, but reports to both the General Assembly and the Security Council; unlike most other specialized agencies, it does not do most of its work with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The IAEA's structure

and function is defined by its founding document: the IAEA's Statute. The IAEA has three main bodies: the Board of Governors, the General Conference, and the Secretariat. The IAEA exists to pursue "safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear sciences and technology." The IAEA pursues this mission with three main functions: inspections of existing nuclear facilities to ensure peaceful use, information and standards to ensure the stability of nuclear facilities, and as a hub for the sciences seeking peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

### **INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE**

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946.

The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies. The role of the Court is to settle purely inter-state conflicts, such as (but not limited to) border disputes. The jurisdiction of the ICJ extends to all United Nations member states.

The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. It is assisted by a Registry, its administrative organ. Its official languages are English and French.

### **INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT**

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC is based on a treaty, joined by 105 countries.

The ICC is a court of last resort. It will not act if a case is investigated or prosecuted by a national judicial system unless the national proceedings are not genuine, for example if formal proceedings were undertaken solely to shield a person from criminal responsibility. In addition, the ICC only tries those accused of the gravest crimes.

The jurisdiction of the ICC extends only to citizens of the 105 signatories on the Rome Statute of the ICC; the proceedings hold no legal weight against anyone else. One notable non-signatory of the Rome Statute is the United States of America.