Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

A Glossary of Terms for UN Delegates

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UNITAR
United Nations Institute for Training and Research
The United Nations, through its Headquarters in New York and Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, convenes thousands of formal and informal, official and unofficial, meetings and conferences each year. Many events are recurring, such as the sessions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The specialized agencies and other bodies and programmes hold hundreds of additional conferences, not to mention expert meetings, negotiation committees, working groups, and the growing number of conferences of the parties and subsidiary body meetings to major conventions.

Taken together, more than 10,000 meetings and conferences take place annually which involve the participation of diplomats from missions accredited to the United Nations, senior and ministerial officials and technical experts from capitals, and observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Effective participation at these meetings and conferences requires delegates to master not only the substantive issues under discussion and debate, but also a rich vocabulary of terms specific to multilateral conferences organized in the context of the UN system.

This glossary provides definitions to over 700 terms, abbreviations and acronyms frequently heard at UN conferences. These terms relate to the structure and functioning of the United Nations organs, programmes and bodies, as well as the specialized agencies; regional intergovernmental organizations; decision-making processes, procedures and forums; regional and geographical groups; other groups and alliances; informal contact groups; and documents. The glossary also includes the names of many commonly mentioned international conferences and conventions. Terms are cross-referenced to enable users to identify similar terms and/or variations in the definition of a term.

The glossary is not an official document, and the list of terms is certainly not exhaustive. The glossary will hopefully complement...
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other glossaries and dictionaries which have been published on diplomacy and international relations over the years, in addition to those published or disseminated by other organizations in the UN system.

The glossary targets primarily the newly accredited multilateral delegate who is unfamiliar with the wide array of UN-related terms and abbreviations, although it will no doubt be of equal assistance to other delegates, including scientific and technical experts from capitals, staff of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, and representatives from non-governmental organizations.

Many individuals have contributed to the glossary’s drafting, revision and editing. I wish to acknowledge in particular the glossary’s two principal contributors: Ronald A. Walker, Visiting Fellow, Asia Pacific School of Diplomacy, Australian National University, and former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations; and Brook Boyer, Senior Programme Officer of UNITAR. Other individuals who have contributed to earlier drafts, provided insightful comments and direction and/or provided editorial assistance include Isabel Hubert, Jean Gazarian, Jean Luca Burci, Rabih Haddad, Arun Seetulsingh, Birgit Viohl, Fabian Lemmes, Beat Kube, Chungwon Park, Hyun-Binn Cho and Frédéric M-Deschenes.

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User Notes

This glossary aims to clarify a wide range of terms used in multilateral meetings and conferences. The definitions provided reflect current usage, which is not necessarily consistent from one organization or context to another. Some terms may also have an everyday meaning not given here, and some have particular meanings in international law, which the glossary does not purport to cover in detail.

Terms are also consistently evolving and many have no authoritative definition. The term “friend of the chair”, for example, has been used for many decades to designate a delegate who has been charged by the presiding officer of a conference to perform a particular task (usually to find consensus on a body of issues). In the early to mid-1990s, some conferences have started to use the plural form of the term (e.g. friends of the chair) to designate members of a contact group convened by the presiding officer. Situations of this kind may cause confusion.

- Some terms have multiple definitions. They are provided in sequence (1, 2, 3…) with no order of importance;
- Words, abbreviations or acronyms in parentheses at the beginning of a definition indicate the context in which this usage is likely to be met;
- Terms in bold print are defined elsewhere in the glossary;
- Where relevant, World Wide Web page addresses are provided;
- Capitalization and spelling are according to the United Nations Editorial Manual (Department of Conference Services, New York, 1983). In general, capitals are only used for proper nouns (e.g. the name of a specific treaty, organization, etc.) or when the term is contextualised.
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A

Aarhus Convention


Abdus Salam ICTP

Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, legally referred to as ‘International Centre for Theoretical Physics’, is operated as a joint programme by UNESCO and IAEA. Administration is by UNESCO.

absent (from a vote)

Said of a delegation that does not cast a vote. It may be in the room but either not entitled, or choosing not, to vote.

ABS

(CBD) Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.
abstain (verb), abstention (noun)

To vote (or a vote that is) neither in favour nor against the question. It registers absence of support, but with less opposition than with a negative vote. Under most rules of procedure, delegations that abstain are not counted as ‘present and voting’ in that vote.

ACABQ

(GA) Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Members are appointed individually on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee.

acclamation

A procedure whereby a conference adopts a proposal without a vote, all delegations having indicated their support for it, e.g. by applause.

accreditation

The process of submitting credentials:
1. by representatives of a State, to an international organization;
2. by delegates (including observers), to an international conference.

ACP


www.acpsec.org
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**ACT**

Amazon Cooperation Treaty adopted in 1978. See **ACTO**.

**ACTO**

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization. Established in 2002 as the Secretariat of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty among the Governments of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela with the goal of promoting sustainable development in the Amazon.

www.octa.org.br/

**Acts, the**


**ad hoc committee, ad hoc conference**

A committee formed to deal with a particular topic, e.g. Ad Hoc Committee of the GA or of the CD. As applied to committees, the adjective is today only historical; its former inference that the committee was established on a temporary basis no longer applies. In the case of a conference, however, the term indicates that it is not part of an ongoing series and has been set up to perform a particular task.

**ad referendum**

Subject to subsequent agreement by government(s) (*Latin*).
ADB
Asian Development Bank. One of the *regional development banks*. The same initials are sometimes used for the African Development Bank *(AfDB)*.

AfDB
African Development Bank. One of the *regional development banks*.

African Group
An *electoral group* in the *GA* and in most *specialized agencies* which also functions as a *caucus group* and coalition at many conferences. It is composed of all States in Africa, including the island States of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Western Indian Ocean and operates as a *sub-group* within the *G77*.

African Union (AU)
The principal and supreme regional organization in Africa, and successor organization to the former *Organization of African Unity* (OAU). All members of the *African Group* are members of the African Union, with the exception of Morocco.

AFTA
*ASEAN* Free Trade Area.
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**agenda**

The programme of work of a UN organ or conference. Each one of them must adopt its agenda as one of its first acts. Usually this is based on a provisional agenda prepared in advance and circulated as a *pre-session document* by the *conference secretariat* in consultation with the parties and the *presiding officer*. The agenda is provisional until adopted in accordance with the *rules of procedure* or other relevant authority.

**Agenda 21**

A set of principles and actions for development on an environmentally sustainable basis, adopted at *UNCED*, at Rio de Janeiro, in 1992.

**Agenda for Peace**

A 1992 report by the *Secretary-General* on ways of strengthening UN capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping which was followed by the Supplement to an Agenda for Peace in 1995.


**agreement**

Often used interchangeably with the word “treaty”. For its specific legal meaning, see *UN Treaty Collection - Treaty Reference Guide*.

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**AITIC**

Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation. An intergovernmental organization based in Geneva that assists less-advantaged countries.

[www.acici.org/aitic/](http://www.acici.org/aitic/)

**ALADI**

Spanish abbreviation for the Latin American Integration Association established by the 1980 Montevideo Treaty by twelve Member Countries. **Mercosur** (involving only part of the membership) is sometimes described as one of the achievements of ALADI’s objectives.

[www.aladi.org](http://www.aladi.org)

**Amber box**

(WTO) A type of agricultural subsidy that Member States have agreed to reduce. See **Blue box** and **Green box**.

**ambit claim**

(Negotiation) A demand or proposal which represents a **delegation**’s maximum ambition but considerably exceeds what it expects to achieve.
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**amendment**

1. An alteration or addition to an existing legal instrument, e.g. an amendment to a convention, treaty or protocol.
2. A modification to a proposal (draft resolution, decision or other text) under debate or negotiation, formally proposed by someone other than the sponsor(s) of the proposal. See revision.

**Antarctic Treaty**

Provides for peaceful scientific cooperation in Antarctica and demilitarizes the continent zone. Entered into force in 1961.

**AOSIS**

Alliance of Small Island States. A caucus group of 43 small island and low-lying coastal States in the climate change negotiations. Has also functioned at a number of other conferences in the UN system.

[www.sidsnet.org/aosis](http://www.sidsnet.org/aosis)

**APEC**

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. A forum that was established in 1989 to promote economic integration around the Pacific Rim and to sustain economic growth. APEC currently has 21 members.

[www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)
Arria Formula

A meeting format of the members of the Security Council with representatives of non-Council members and/or other entities, including NGOs, in an informal and confidential environment. Unlike the meetings or informal consultations of the Security Council, Arria Formula meetings are neither announced nor recorded in the Journal of the United Nations and since they are not meetings of the Council, its Rules of Procedure do not apply.

ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations. A now 10-member regional community founded in 1967 with the aim to accelerate economic growth and social progress, as well as to promote peace and security.

ASEM

Asia – Europe Meeting. An informal process of dialogue and cooperation between the EU and 13 Asian countries with summits taking place every two years. Occasionally other States are invited to attend the summits.

ASG

Assistant Secretary-General.
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Asian Group

The **GA electoral group** composed of States from Asia and the Pacific Island Countries (PIC). In most **specialized agencies**, these States are in different electoral groups. However, the Asian Group plus Turkey caucuses in a number of conferences.

**assessed contribution**

The contribution (expressed as a percentage of the budget of an organization) which a Member State is obligated to pay. Assessed contributions take account of each Member State’s GDP.

**ASSET**

(IAEA) Assessment of Safety Significant Event Team.

**ATCM**

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. The annual conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

**ATS**

Antarctic Treaty Secretariat.  

[www.ats.org.ar](http://www.ats.org.ar)
Australia Group

An informal arrangement which aims to allow exporting or transhipping countries to minimize the risk of assisting chemical and biological weapon proliferation.

www.australiagroup.net
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backloading

(Trade and other agreements) Ensuring that the impact of commitments is mainly felt towards the end of a phase-in period. See frontloading.

Bangkok, Treaty of


Basel Convention

Shorthand for the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. A global agreement for addressing the problems and challenges posed by hazardous waste, which entered into force in 1989. Its Secretariat is administered by UNEP and regular COPs are held.

www.basel.int

Basel Protocol

Shorthand for the 1999 Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation establishing rules on liability and compensation for damages caused by accidental spills of hazardous waste during export, import or during disposal.
Beijing
Informal shorthand for the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing in 1995 and the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted on that occasion. See CSW.

Berlin Mandate
(UNFCCC) Adopted at COP I of the UNFCCC and led to the Kyoto Protocol.

Bern Convention
Refers to at least two international instruments:
1. Shorthand for the Bern Convention of 1886 for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, one of the two cornerstones of the WIPO Treaty System. See Paris Convention;

Bern Union
(WIPO) The International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. See Paris Union.

Bicycle Theory
(Informal) A suggestion that if a process does not continue to make progress at an adequate rate, it will ‘fall over’.
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**BIE**

International Bureau of Exhibitions (from the initials of *Bureau International des Expositions* in French). An international organization dealing with the frequency and quality of world exhibitions. Not to be confused with IBE.  

www.bie-paris.org

**binding (adjective)**

Which gives rise to an obligation under international law. As contrasted, for example, with a *declaratory* resolution, a voluntary code of conduct or a political commitment.

**binding (noun)**

(WTO) A synonym for ‘concession’, e.g. an enforceable legal obligation not to raise tariffs above a rate specified in a country’s ‘schedule of concessions’.

**BIS**

Bank for International Settlements (in Basel, Switzerland), whose members are central banks.  

www.bis.org/
black box

Analogy to a box whose contents cannot be seen. Used as a noun, adjective or verb in a number of contexts. For example: 1. (Negotiation) ‘One element of the package is still a black box’, meaning that the specifics of that element are as yet not established; 2. (Arms control verification) ‘These industrial facilities are black boxed’, meaning that the agreement provides that they are exempt from inspection because adequate assurance can be obtained in other ways, such as monitoring what goes in and out of them.

Blue box

(WTO) A type of agricultural subsidy involving compensatory payments for production limitation/limiting programmes. See Amber box and Green box.

BPOA

Barbados Programme of Action to assist the sustainable development of SIDS. Adopted in 1994, it was followed by the Mauritius Strategy for the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2005.

www.sidsnet.org

Board of Directors

(World Bank and IFC) The Executive Council of these organizations.
Board of Governors

1. (IAEA) The Executive Committee of the Agency.
2. (World Bank) The General Conference of the IBRD, IDA and IFC.

bogged down

(Negotiation) A less formal equivalent of ‘stalled’ but with greater implied optimism that progress could resume. It is mainly used in sentences such as ‘let us not get bogged down on details, but look instead at the broader picture’. See breakdown and stalemate.

Bonn Convention

See CMS.

Bonn Guidelines


BONUCA

UN Peace-Building Office in the Central African Republic.

bracketing

The process of inserting square brackets around non-agreed text in documents under negotiation.
brackets (square)
Used in documents under negotiation to indicate that the bracketed words or text are not yet agreed by the conference.

Brahimi Report
Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi. See DPKO.
www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons

break (noun)
(Negotiation) An agreed temporary interruption, to allow participants to rest, collect their thoughts, consult, etc.

breakdown
(Negotiation) A point at which negotiations make no progress and the participants see no prospect of agreement. See stalemate, bogged down and stalled.

break off
(Negotiation) To withdraw from negotiations, to put an end to them. Can be temporary or final.

breakthrough
(Negotiation) The removal of a major obstacle to agreement, suggesting that the negotiations can now progress towards a satisfactory outcome.
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**Bretton Woods Institutions**

The **IMF** and the **IBRD** created by the Bretton Woods Agreement at the UN Monetary and Financial Conference in 1944.

**BRICSA**

A **caucus group** composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which has met at summit level.

**Brundtland Commission**

The World Commission on Environment and Development, convened by the UN and chaired by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. The Commission’s Report, *Our Common Future* (1987), popularized the notion of ‘sustainable development’.

**BTWC**


[www.opbw.org](http://www.opbw.org)

**bundling/unbundling**

(Negotiation) A technique that refers to the aggregation or separation of **agenda** items or issues.
bureau

1. The formal leadership of the conference. The specific composition of the bureau is usually enumerated in the rules of procedure, but it usually consists of the president, vice-president(s), (or the chairman, vice-chairmen) and rapporteur. In some conferences, the bureau, sometimes assisted by the conference secretary, meets as a steering committee.
2. (In some organizations) The secretariat.

BWC or BWT

See BTWC.
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C

CA

(UPU) The Council of Administration, the Executive Committee of UPU.

CACAM

(UNFCCC) A caucus group in the climate change negotiations comprising countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Albania and Moldova.

Cairns Group

(WTO) A broad-based coalition of States established in 1986 to support agricultural trade liberalization. The Cairns Group currently numbers eighteen members from four continents. www.cairns.org

Cairo

Informal shorthand for the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 or the Programme of Action it adopted.

Cancun

Informal shorthand for the WTO Fifth Ministerial Conference, held in Cancún, Mexico, in 2003.
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**CANZ**

An electoral sub-group in **WEOG** and a **caucus group** in a range of conferences, composed of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

**CAP**

(EU) Common Agricultural Policy.

**CARICOM**

Caribbean Community and Common Market. Promotes the integration of the economies of its Member States and the coordination of their foreign policies. The Community acts as a **caucus group** in some international conferences.

**Cartagena Protocol**

(CBD) Agreement on Biosafety adopted by the **CBD COP** in 2000.

www.biodiv.org/biosafety/

**carve-out**

(Negotiation) An agreement to exempt a portion of the subject matter (e.g. a specified economic activity) from the application of an agreement.

**CASA**

(DDA) **Coordination Action on Small Arms**.
**cast a vote (verb)**

To vote.

**CAT**

Committee Against Torture. Composed of ten experts appointed by the State Parties of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984). The State Parties must report every four years to the Committee.

**caucus (verb)**

To meet as a caucus, prior to or during conferences.

**caucus group**

A group of **delegations** which meet in the margins of international conferences, and in some cases outside them, to discuss issues relevant to the conference(s) and in some cases seek to develop common positions.

**CBD**

UN Convention on Biological Diversity. Adopted at the Rio Earth Summit and entered into force in 1994. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. **Secretariat** in Montreal and regular **COPs** are held.

[www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)
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**CCAMLR**

(Antarctic Treaty) Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. The same initials are used for the Commission which is the implementing agency for the Convention.

www.ccamlr.org

**CCO**

(UNAIDS) Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations.

**CCP**

(FAO) Committee on Commodity Problems.

**CCPCJ**

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. One of the functional commissions of ECOSOC.

**CCW Convention**


**CD**

The Conference on Disarmament.
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CDB

CDM
(UNFCCC/KP) Clean Development Mechanism. One of the three mechanisms for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. [cdm.unfccc.int/](http://cdm.unfccc.int/)

CEB
UN System’s Chief Executives Board of Coordination. Replacing the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). [ceb.unsystem.org](http://ceb.unsystem.org)

CEDAW

CEIT
Countries with Economies in Transition.
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**CEN-SAD**


www.cen-sad.org/

**CER**

Closer Economic Relationship between Australia and New Zealand. A regional economic integration arrangement which interacts with others, e.g. AFTA-CER.

**CERD**

Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Composed of eighteen experts elected in accordance with the Convention of the same name and reporting to the GA.

**CERN**


www.cern.ch

**CESCR**

(ECOSOC) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which functions as the COP of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
CFCs

Chlorofluorocarbons. A category of chemical substances that destroy the ozone layer. Regulated by the Montreal Protocol.

CFS

(FAO) Committee on World Food Security.

chair

The presiding officer of a conference.

chairman

Title of a presiding officer (often of a committee, working group, expert group or caucus group). The term chairman is gender-neutral and is correct, although ‘chair’ and ‘chairperson’ are also used in practice. The title ‘president’ tends to be reserved for the plenary sessions of major conferences.

chairman’s text, draft or compilation text

A draft text introduced by the presiding officer in an attempt to help the conference towards agreement. It can include some words or text in square brackets, indicating that the issues to which they relate are for later resolution. A chairman’s draft is often an attempt at a final text that might secure consensus. A chairman’s compilation, on the contrary, only puts together a number of competing proposals submitted by delegates.
Chinese Taipei
(WTO and APEC) The formal name of Taiwan.

CHOGM
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

CHR
Commission on Human Rights. Not to be confused with HRC.
www.ohchr.org

CICP
(UNODC) Centre for International Crime Prevention.

CIGEPS
(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport, a sub-organ of the UNESCO General Conference.

CIS
Commonwealth of Independent States.

CITES
www.cites.org
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**CLIPS**

(WMO) Climate Information and Prediction Services.

**Closed door (briefing/meeting)**

One to which access is restricted to the members of the relevant conference, committee or organization.

**CMS**


www.cms.int

**CND**

Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

**COAG**

(FAO) Committee on Agriculture.

**coalition**

A group of States or delegations which work together for a particular objective.

**Codex Alimentarius**

Publication on food standards maintained by a joint FAO/WHO Commission.

www.codexalimentarius.net/
COFI

(FAO) Committee on Fisheries.

COFO

(FAO) Committee on Forests.

COMESA


Commission on Narcotic Drugs

A functional commission of ECOSOC. The main policy-making body for the United Nations on drug-related matters. It is also the governing body of UNDCP.

www.unodc.org

Commission on Population and Development

A functional commission of ECOSOC, mandated to monitor and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by ICPD.

Commission on Science and Technology for Development

A functional commission of ECOSOC.
committee

A subsidiary conference, often composed of a subset of the members of a larger conference (e.g. executive committee), but in some cases open to all delegations (e.g. main committees and a committee of the whole). Any organ or conference may create one or more committees to perform a particular task (e.g. drafting committee), to address a particular issue (e.g. credentials committee) or a particular set of agenda items (e.g. main committees). In some cases, some of these committees are institutionalized by the statute of an international organization or other such formal authority. Committees can debate and at times negotiate and make recommendations to their parent body; they cannot make decisions on behalf of that body.

committee of the whole (COW)

Sometimes established by a conference to facilitate discussion and negotiation. Like other committees, the power of the COW is limited to making recommendations for adoption by the conference in plenary meeting.

Committee on Conferences

(GA) A permanent subsidiary of the GA which makes recommendations on the calendar of conferences.
Committee on Information

(GA) Dealing with the United Nations public information policies and activities.

www.un.org/ga/coi/

Commonwealth

A community of States, most of which were part of the former British Empire. The Commonwealth does not normally caucus in UN meetings but does hold conferences of its own.

www.thecommonwealth.org

Commonwealth of Independent States

A community of States and economic union composed of twelve of the former constituent republics of the Soviet Union. See CIS.

www.cisstat.com

communication

1. Any formal message transmitted from one entity to another, as, for example, from a secretariat to the Member States. See notification.

2. (CHR) A complaint to CHR from an individual or group alleging violations of human rights (the Commission has established procedures for considering such communications).
compensatory finance (schemes)

Intergovernmental arrangements to reduce the impact of fluctuations in commodity prices for national economies which are especially vulnerable to them. The IMF Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility and the EU’s STABEX (for ACP countries) are two examples.

concession

1. (Negotiation) Something which is agreed by one party with a view to meeting the concerns of another.
2. (WTO) A legally enforceable commitment to reduce a tariff or to remove a restriction on the trade in services.

conference of the parties (COP)

A number of treaties, including several of the environmental and human rights conventions, provide for meetings of the COP to oversee the implementation of the convention or protocol and to approve its budget and financial regulations. The COP can also provide guidance, receive reports and make recommendations to the parties. COPs convene usually on an annual or biannual basis. Some are serviced by permanent secretariats. See MOP.

Conference on Disarmament

The single multilateral negotiating forum for arms control and disarmament, established by UNSSOD, but not technically a UN body in that it determines its own membership and is not subsidiary to any UN body.
(ECOSOC) Committee on NGOs. Assesses NGOs seeking consultative status.

**consensus**

A procedure whereby a conference takes a decision without a vote. Consensus is distinct from unanimity in that it can coexist with differing views, to a degree. The presiding officer determines whether consensus exists (or ‘has been reached’) in the light of the views expressed by delegations and his/her assessment of ‘the sense of the meeting’. Like all decisions by presiding officers, such determinations are subject to their acceptance by the conference. Most UN bodies have refrained from limiting their presiding officer’s freedom of action by defining the term in their rules of procedure. Despite or because of its subtle and flexible meaning, consensus is the preferred mode of decision-making in all conferences and the only one in many.

**constituency**

1. A body of opinion and/or interests to which a government, representative or leader must be responsive.
2. A body of opinion and/or interest which is capable of being represented (e.g. “At this conference, there would be a constituency for someone who argued that (...)”)
3. (GEF) The Member Countries that a GEF Council Member represents.
consult (verb)

To talk to another delegation, the secretariat, or home authorities, with a view to learning their views.

consultation

1. The action of consulting.
2. (WTO) The first stage of the WTO dispute settlement procedure which requires the parties to a dispute to hold discussions (possibly involving a mediator) with a view to resolving the dispute.

consultations of the whole

(Security Council) Informal consultations which may only include Members of the Security Council and Secretariat.

Consultative Party

(Antarctic Treaty) A Party to the Treaty which is entitled to participate in decision-making in the ATCM. Consultative status is linked to the scale of scientific research undertaken in Antarctica. The other Parties to the Treaty are called 'non-Consultative Parties'.
consultative status

1. A formal relationship with ECOSOC which may be granted to not-for-profit public NGOs under certain conditions. Consultative status tends to help achieve observer status at UN conferences.


contact group

A condensed forum for discussion and/or negotiation, with the objective of assisting the process of forging consensus. Contact groups are often convened by presiding officers. They count as informal consultations and have no formal, decision-making status. See informal contact group.

Contestability of a market, (international)

(WTO) The extent to which, from the viewpoint of an exporter, a market is free from distortions due to regulation or other action by the government or to monopolies, cartels, etc.

contracting party (State)

The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties defines ‘contracting State’ as ‘a State which has consented to be bound by the treaty, whether or not the treaty has entered into force.’

Convention on Wetlands

See the Ramsar Convention.
convoy problem

(Negotiation) A reference to the fact that a group can only progress at the rate of the slowest of its members. See lowest common denominator.

COP or CoP

Conference of the parties to a convention or other treaty. See MOP.

COP1, COP2, COP3, etc.

First, second, third, etc. session or meeting of the Conference of the Parties (to a particular treaty).

Copenhagen Consensus

An attempt by a group of independent economists in 2004 to prioritize projects for improving global welfare.  
www.copenhagenconsensus.com

Copenhagen Declaration

Adopted by world leaders at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995.
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**COP/MOP**

(Some environmental conventions) Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving also as a Meeting of the Parties to a protocol.

**COPUOS or UNCOPUOS**


**corridors**

Traditionally conference corridors and lobbies, but includes anywhere other than in the formal work of the conference, where delegations engage in the informal exchanges, negotiations, caucus meetings, etc. By extension, those exchanges, caucus meetings, etc. themselves. ‘Corridor work’ is engaging in such activities.

**co-sponsor**

A delegation which joins others in proposing a resolution or other formal proposal for adoption by a conference.

**Cotonou Agreement**

A trade agreement signed between the EU and 77 ACP countries in 2000. Replaces the Lomé Conventions. This agreement provides that the non-reciprocal trade preferences from the EU are to be removed after a transition period (2002-2007) during which negotiations of EPAs will take place.
council

Name of the executive committee of several of the specialized agencies.

Countries with economies in transition

Countries with formerly centrally planned economies and undergoing transition to market oriented ones. See CEIT.

COW

Committee of the whole.

CPF

Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Involves fourteen international organizations and supports UNFF.

CRC

Committee on the Rights of the Child. Composed of ten experts elected in accordance with the Convention of the same name.

http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm
credentials

A document signed by the Head of State or Government (or in some cases another high authority) to establish the status of:
1. a representative to the United Nations, its Offices and other international organizations; or
2. a delegate or delegation to an international conference.
Without credentials in good order, a person is not a delegate and cannot legally vote or otherwise act on behalf of his/her State (or other sending entity). See full powers.

credentials committee

A committee mandated to review the credentials of delegations, ensure that they are properly accredited by an authority which is entitled to be represented at that conference, and report to the plenary of a conference.

CRP

1. Conference room paper. A text distributed by the conference secretariat as an aid to debate as opposed to a formal proposal. See working paper.
2. (IAEA) Coordinated Research Project.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

CSD
Commission on Sustainable Development. A Functional Commission of ECOSOC. Established to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21.

CSOCD
Commission for Social Development. A Functional Commission of ECOSOC. Established to monitor the implementation of the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen.

CSW
Commission on the Status of Women. A Functional Commission of ECOSOC mandated, inter alia, to monitor implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW).

CTBT

CTBTO Preparatory Commission
(CTBT) The Preparatory Commission for the implementation of the CTBT and the first COP. www.ctbto.org
CWC

Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

D

DAC

(OECD) Development Assistance Committee.  
www.oecd.org/dac

DAW

(UN Secretariat) Division for the Advancement of Women.  
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/

DDA

(UN Secretariat) Department for Disarmament Affairs.  
disarmament2.un.org/

DDG

Deputy Director-General.

de minimis

(WTO) ‘Too small to warrant regulation’. Examples include ‘de minimis imports’, ‘de minimis subsidies’ and ‘de minimis dumping margins’, each of which define the lower limits below which otherwise applicable regulations do not apply or responses are not permissible (*Latin*, abbreviation for *de minimis non curat lex* meaning ‘the law is not concerned about trivial matters’).
Decalogue

(CD) The ten subject areas on which the Conference on Disarmament has decided to work.

declaration

A formal statement of special significance issued by ministers (Ministerial Declaration) or delegates at the closure of a conference, summit or other event. Declarations may be legally binding but usually are not. See UN Treaty Collection - Treaty Reference Guide.

untreaty.un.org/

declaratory

Which declares an intention or opinion etc., as opposed to expressing an agreed commitment.

declaratory interpretation

A statement made at the time of signature or ratification in which a State spells out its interpretation of one or more of the provisions of the treaty. Here the term ‘declaratory’ emphasizes the contrast with ‘agreed’.

delegate

A representative of a State or organization who has been authorized to speak and act on its behalf and who has been duly accredited to a conference.
delegation

A team of delegates.

delegation station

An office of the conference secretariat from which conference documents are distributed and where duplicates may be requested.

deliberative forum

A conference that can discuss issues and make recommendations but cannot negotiate treaty texts.

DESA

(UN Secretariat) Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

www.un.org/esa/desa.htm

DG

Director-General.

Digital Agenda

(WIPO) The work programme for the Organization responding to the confluence of the Internet, digital technologies and the intellectual property system.

www.wipo.int
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

Digital Solidarity Fund

Established at the first segment of the WSIS in 2003, the fund supports development projects aimed at reducing information society disparities between and within countries.

www.dsf-fsn.org

diplomatic conference

A conference of plenipotentiaries, held for the purpose of initialling or signing a multilateral treaty. The text of the agreement has usually been settled before the diplomatic conference convenes.

diplomatic hour

A reference to the practice of ‘stopping the clock’ to prolong a meeting or a negotiation beyond its previously agreed finishing time. (A mistranslation of the French for ‘diplomatic time’).

Director-General

The title of the chief executives of several of the specialized agencies.

disqualified from voting

Not entitled to vote, e.g. because credentials are not in order or because of non-payment of assessed contribution. See not financial/non-financial.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**DM**

(UN Secretariat) Department of Management.

**DMAB**

(UPU) Direct Mail Advisory Board.

**DNA**

(UNFCCC/KP) Designated National Authority. The national agency representing a government taking part in CDM/JI projects under the Kyoto Protocol.

**Doha**

(WTO) Informal shorthand for the WTO Fourth Ministerial Conference, held in Doha, Qatar, in 2001.

**Doha Development Round**

(WTO) The current round of multilateral trade negotiations which were launched in Doha.

**DPA**

(UN Secretariat) Department of Political Affairs.
DPI

(UN Secretariat) Department of Public Information.

DPKO

(UN Secretariat) Department of Peacekeeping Operations.  
www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/

drafting group (or informal drafting group)

An informal group created by the presiding officer or the conference/committee that meets in private to expedite the process of drafting an agreed text. A text produced by a drafting group has no status until adopted by the parent body.

DSB

(WTO) Dispute Settlement Body.  
www.wto.org

DSF

Digital Solidarity Fund.

DSG

Deputy Secretary-General. The second highest rank in the UN Secretariat.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**Dublin Group**

A group of like-minded donor countries which meet to exchange information and sometimes coordinate their actions in relation to anti-drug assistance programmes to developing countries.
E10


early harvest

(Negotiation) Benefits for the parties to an agreement which are received soon after its conclusion, as contrasted with those that may take a number of years to eventuate. ‘Proposing an early harvest’ can mean inviting other parties to an agreement or impending agreement to take steps to ensure that it yields benefits for the parties earlier than previously envisaged.

Eastern European Group

An electoral group in the GA and many other international organizations, composed of the former communist countries of Europe and the former Soviet Union. Occasionally functions as a caucus, but most of its members also participate in Western Group meetings as observers.

EBRD

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The regional development bank for Europe. www.ebrd.com

EC

European Community.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**ECA**

**ECE**
(ECOSOC) Economic Commission for Europe (in Geneva). One of the regional commissions of ECOSOC. www.unece.org

**ECLAC**
(ECOSOC) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (in Santiago). One of the regional commissions of ECOSOC. www.eclac.org

**eco-**
An abbreviation for ‘ecological’, used as a prefix to create a new term relating to protection of the natural environment (e.g. eco-labeling, eco-accounting, etc.).

**ECOSOC**
United Nations Economic and Social Council. One of the principal organs of the UN. www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/
ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States. Established in 1976 to promote economic integration and political cooperation.

EFTA

European Free Trade Association. A free trade area among Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. www.efta.int/

Electoral groups

The groups into which delegations are divided for electoral purposes and for other purposes where geographical equity or representation is wanted (e.g. the distribution of bureau positions in a large conference). The GA and each of the specialized agencies have different electoral groups. In general, electoral groups do not caucus on political issues, although a small number of regional groups (notably the African Group and GRULAC) are both electoral and caucus groups.

Electronic voting

A way of voting in which delegates register their vote by pressing a button (as contrasted with a show of hands or roll-call).
Emergency Special Session

(GA) A session called at very short notice in accordance with resolution 377 A (V) (Uniting for Peace) when a deadlock occurs in the Security Council.

Employer delegate

(ILO) A member of a Member State delegation to the International Labour Conference who represents the employers of that State. Each delegation to this Conference consists of two delegates appointed by the government and two others nominated in agreement with the most representative national organizations of employers and workers respectively. See worker delegate.

endorsed candidate

A candidate supported by an electoral group.

Environmental Integrity Group

(UNFCCC) A caucus group in the climate change negotiations, consisting of Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland, in addition to several other Parties, to uphold ‘environment integrity’ while recognizing the need for flexibility.
Environmental Management Group (EMG)

Created in 1999 by the GA with the aim to enhance cooperation in the fields of environment and human settlements within and beyond the UN system. Chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP. Secretariat based in Geneva. www.unemg.org

EPA

(EU / ACP) Economic Partnership Agreements. By 2008, EPAs will replace the Lomé Accords and the Cotonou Agreement governing trade relations between the ACP countries and the EU.

ESCAP

(ECOSOC) United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (in Bangkok). One of the regional commissions of ECOSOC. www.unescap.org

ESCWA

(ECOSOC) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (in Beirut). One of the regional commissions of ECOSOC. www.escwa.org.lb

EU

European Union.
European Community (EC)

The precursor of the European Union and the collective term for the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community. Note that EC is not an accepted abbreviation for the European Commission.

European Union (EU)

The European regional integration organization in which the Member States partly pool their sovereignty. It is a member in its own right of several international organizations and a party to various treaties, in some cases alongside its Member States. The European Commission (one of the principal institutions of the EU) has competence in a number of fields, notably trade, and as such participates in the work of several international conferences, notably in the WTO. In other conferences the Member States routinely caucus and seek to develop common positions, sometimes in association with other States, especially those which aspire to join the Union.

ex officio

By virtue of his/her position or function (Latin).
Executive Committee, Board or Council

A body elected from the membership of an international organization to provide direction and oversight to the work of the organization or one of its programmes, in between meetings of the General Conference. In some organizations it has a different title (e.g. in the IAEA ‘Board of Governors’, in ILO ‘Governing Body’ and in ICAO, ITU and IMO among others it is known as ‘Council’).

Executive Director

1. The title of the chief executives of several of the specialized agencies and UN programmes.
2. (ILO) The second highest rank in the Secretariat.
3. (World Bank) A member of the Board of Directors.

expert group

A subsidiary conference formed to discuss issues at a technical (as opposed to political) level and sometimes to make recommendations to the parent conference. The members of such groups are often appointed or elected in their personal capacities.

expert meeting

Informal meeting of representatives of governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, scientific bodies and academia to discuss scientific, technical or other issues. Participation in such meetings is by invitation.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

extended bureau

Composed of both the present and previous bureau members of a conference. It operates at some conferences with the purpose of ensuring the smooth transition from one session to another.

extraterritoriality

An attempt by a State to apply its laws beyond its jurisdiction or conversely to juridically excise part of the territory of a State so that its laws no longer apply there. Although widely condemned in theory, the principle has some benign applications, e.g. the extraterritoriality or immunity enjoyed by diplomatic missions, and laws which punish nationals who engage in pedophilia or corruption in other jurisdictions.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

F

FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (in Rome). One of the specialized agencies.

www.fao.org

FCCC
See UNFCCC.

FCTC

www.who.int/tobacco/framework/

Fifth Committee
(GA) One of the Main Committees. Deals with administrative and budgetary issues.

final act
A solemn document sometimes adopted by a major conference at the end of its work, which may include a report on the conference but whose main point is an important decision or declaration.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**FIPS**

(WTO) Five interested parties. A contact group to address questions of agricultural trade composed of Australia, Brazil, India, the EU and the USA.

**First Committee**

(GA) One of the Main Committees. Deals with disarmament and international security.

**flexibility**

1. (Negotiation) Willingness to adjust one’s position and take (some) account of the concerns of others.
2. (UNFCCC/KP) A characteristic given to the three mechanisms of implementation under the Kyoto Protocol.

**floor**

1. The part of the conference room where the delegates have their assigned seats, e.g. ‘speaking from the floor’ as opposed to ‘from the rostrum’.
2. By extension, the delegates, e.g. ‘the speaker tried to persuade the floor’.
3. By extension of 2, ‘to take the floor’ is to start speaking to the meeting or to make an intervention.
4. By extension of 3, permission (from the presiding officer) to speak to the meeting, ‘To seek the floor’ is to ask the presiding officer for his/her permission to address the meeting, as in ‘the delegate sought the floor and the chair gave it to him.’ ‘Microphone’ is an informal synonym for meaning 4.
FMCT

Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. Long called for by the GA and currently under negotiation among a limited number of countries. It would ban the production of weapons grade nuclear material.

FoC or FOC

Friend of the chair.

focal point

An official or agency designated by a government to serve as the focus or channel of communications on a particular topic. Some organizations may have two types of focal points, such as the GEF which has political and operational focal points.

formal informals

The most formal of the informal meetings in the committees of the General Assembly or some other intergovernmental forums. Formal informals are off-the-record meetings with no sound recordings or press releases.

Fourth Committee

(GA) One of the Main Committees. Alternative name for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**Francophonie**

Informal shorthand for the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF). The intergovernmental organization of French-speaking States and Governments at the political level. The OIF is active but does not normally *caucus* in UN conferences. The *Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie* (AIF) is the OIF’s agency for technical cooperation.

[www.francophonie.org](http://www.francophonie.org)

**freedom**

Many different rights conferred by multilateral agreements.
1. (ICAO) e.g. First, Second, etc. Freedom. The right to carry certain categories of passengers or freight on a specified route.
2. (WTO) e.g. Freedom of Transit. The right to transport goods unhindered across the territory of another party.
3. (Law of the Sea) Circumscribed rights of unhindered transit or navigation.

**friend of the chair**

A delegate who has been *mandated* by the *presiding officer* to undertake a task, usually that of finding *consensus* on a particular issue or body of issues.

**friends of the chair**

A group of friends of the chair. A *contact group* convened by the *presiding officer*. 
friends of the rapporteur

A contact group convened by the rapporteur, or members of such a group. This term derives from ‘friends of the chair’ and is only used in some conferences.

frontloading

(Trade and other agreements) Ensuring that the impact of commitments is mainly felt towards the beginning of a phase-in period. See backloading.

full powers

A document authorizing a representative to sign a legal instrument on behalf of a State. Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers of Foreign Affairs do not need to present full powers, since they are considered as representatives of a State for all acts related to negotiating and adopting international legal instruments. See credentials.

functional commissions

(ECOSOC) Subsidiary bodies established to assist ECOSOC in the performance of its functions.

FWCW

Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 which adopted a Declaration and Platform for Action. See Beijing and CSW.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

G

G4
Coalition of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan on the proposed expansion of the Security Council.

G5
(Trade negotiations) A caucus group composed of Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico and the USA.

G6
(Trade negotiations) The G5 plus Panama.

G7
The seven largest Western economies. Summits of the Heads of State/Government have now evolved to the G8, but there are still meetings of the G7 ministers of finance, among others.

G8
Annual meeting of Heads of State/Government or ministers of the seven largest Western economies and Russia together with the Commission of the European Union. Originally dealing exclusively with international financial issues, it now also addresses other pressing global problems.
G9

(Informal) The G8 (drawing attention to the fact that, with the EU, it actually has nine members).

G10

1. (International financial institutions) A caucus group of finance ministers and central bank governors of major OECD Member Countries. It also meets at the level of deputies and has a number of working groups.
2. (Nuclear non-proliferation) A ginger group which seeks to forge consensus in support of nuclear non-proliferation.

G11

Also known as the Cartagena Group. A forum of debtor countries in Latin America.

G20

1. (Trade negotiations) A caucus group of developing countries formed at the Cancun Conference. It has a particular focus on trade in agricultural products.
2. (Economic policies) An informal forum for the finance ministries and central banks of major industrial nations and emerging-market countries to discuss and seek agreement on the international monetary and financial system and other international economic questions.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

G24

The Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development. A caucus group of developing countries established in 1971. China participates as ‘Special Invitee’.

G33

(Trade negotiations) A caucus group of developing countries formed just before the Cancun Conference, focusing on proposals for ‘special products’ and a ‘special safeguard mechanism’.

G77

Established in 1964 at the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It seeks to harmonize the positions of developing countries, articulate their collective economic interests and promote its negotiating capacity. Although China is not officially a member of the group, it almost always supports the group’s position. Statements made on behalf of the G77 are given precedence in the speakers list over statements made by the African Group, GRULAC and other groups whose members are also members of the G77.

www.g77.org

G90

(Trade negotiations) A caucus group of the ACP and African Union countries and LDCs formed at the Cancun Conference.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**GA**

United Nations **General Assembly.** See **UNGA.**

[www.un.org/ga](http://www.un.org/ga)

**GATS**

(WTO) **General Agreement on Trade and Services of 1995.**

**GATT**

The 1947 **General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs,** the precursor of **WTO.**

**gavel (noun or verb)**

A wooden hammer used by a **presiding officer.** By extension, a symbolic metaphor for his/her office (e.g., ‘to hand the gavel over to a vice-president’ meaning the task of presiding over the meeting). Other meanings (especially of the verb) relate to the uses a **presiding officer** makes of the gavel to communicate with the **floor.** For example: ‘to gavel down objections’ meaning to silence **delegations** which are vociferously raising objections, by recalling them to **order,** by repeatedly striking the gavel, or ‘to gavel through a decision’, meaning to strike the gavel once, signifying that a decision has been taken, without allowing enough time for any delegation to raise an objection.

**GCOS**

(WMO) **Global Climate Observing System.**
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**GDLN**

Global Development Learning Network. Initiated by the World Bank in 2004 as a global partnership of learning centres using ICT to connect people working in development.

www.gdln.org

**GEF**

Global Environment Facility.

www.gefweb.org

**General Assembly**

One of the principal organs of the UN. All the Member States are represented in the GA and have one vote. Regular sessions are held from September to December. Special or emergency special sessions may also take place. See main committee and subsidiary body.

www.un.org/ga

**General Committee**

(GA) Committee composed of the President and the twenty-one vice-presidents of the GA and the chairmen of the six Main Committees.
**general conference**

A conference of the entire membership of an international organization which discusses the work of the organization and takes administrative decisions. Several of the specialized agencies use the term ‘assembly’ or ‘congress’.

**General Council**

The standing decision-making body of the WTO, composed of representatives of all Member States. It also meets, under different rules, as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) and the Trade Policy Review Body.

**general debate**

An early stage of the GA and other major conferences in which delegation leaders make formal statements, often prepared in capitals.

**general document**

A document circulated by a conference secretariat which is neither limited nor restricted.

**Geneva Conventions**

A number of conventions have been adopted in Geneva but the term usually refers to four Conventions adopted in 1949 (and to which 190 States are now Parties) on International Humanitarian Law. They provide legal safeguard that cover the way wars may be fought and the protection of individuals.

www.icrc.org
Geneva Group

A caucus group of major contributors to the budgets of various international organizations and programmes which discusses and at times develops common positions on budgetary issues.

geographical balance, equity or representation

The distribution of seats between electoral groups in accordance with a formula in the rules of procedure or other authority.

geographical groups

An alternative term for regional groups (although many of these are not based on geography). It refers ambiguously either to electoral groups or caucus groups.

GHG

Greenhouse Gas. A gas responsible for climate change.

GHS

(Environment) Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, managed by an ECOSOC sub-committee of experts.
ginger group

(Informal) A like-minded group of delegations dedicated to promoting a particular idea or philosophy.

Global Compact

An initiative launched by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 1999 that would bring companies on board with UN agencies, civil society and labour to support now ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, anti-corruption and the environment.

www.unglobalcompact.org

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

An inter-agency instrument created in 1991 to help developing countries fund projects and programmes that protect the global environment. Although GEF is an independent organization, its implementing agencies are UNEP, UNDP and the IBRD.

www.gefweb.org

Global Fund

Shorthand for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. A non-UN financial instrument created as a partnership among governments, civil society, the private sector and affected communities to finance the fight against the three diseases.

www.theglobalfund.org
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**GMEF**

(UNEP) Global Ministerial Environment Forum. An open forum on environmental policy which is held during the yearly session of the UNEP **Governing Council**.

**Governing Body**

1. (ILO) The **Executive Committee** of the ILO.
2. (IAEA) The **Board of Governors** and the **General Conference** are referred to as ‘the governing bodies of IAEA’.
3. (UNAIDS) The Programme Coordinating Body (**PCB**).

**GPA**

(UNEP) Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.

www.gpa.unep.org

**grandfather clause**

A provision in an agreement which exempts the consequences of actions taken before the agreement enters into force. Hence the verb ‘to grandfather’ something, meaning to apply such an exemption to it.

**Green box**

(WTO) A category of domestic support measures for agricultural producers exempted from restriction because they have minimal impact on trade. An example is disaster relief. See **Amber box** and **Blue box**.
Green Room

(WTO) An informal negotiating forum initiated by the Director-General of GATT during the Uruguay Round negotiations to discuss and draft compromise texts on specific items among a small group of invited countries. The Green Room process continues in the context of WTO, and sometimes takes the form of ‘mini-ministerial’ meetings prior to or during WTO Ministerial Conferences.

GRID

(UNEP) Global Resources Information Database, which underpins UNEP’s Environmental Assessment Programme. www.grid.unep.ch/

Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC)

An electoral group at the GA and in most specialized agencies which also functions as a like-minded caucus group at many conferences.

group spokesman/spokesperson

A delegate who speaks on behalf of a group.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**group statement**

A statement made on behalf of a group of *delegations* (usually *like-minded*) which have decided to make a joint statement. These are normally given precedence in the *speakers’ list* over statements made in the name of a single delegation.

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**GRULAC**

*Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries.*

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**GUUAM**


[www.guuam.org/](http://www.guuam.org/)
Habitat

UN-HABITAT.

Hague Rules

A number of conventions have been signed at The Hague. Refers here to the shorthand for the International Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules of Law relating to Bills of Lading, adopted in 1924. Establishes liability rules for carriers for loss or damage of goods carried at sea.

HDI

Human Development Index. A summary composite index prepared by UNDP and measuring a country’s average achievements in three elements of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.

www.hdr.undp.org

HFCs

Hydrofluorocarbons. A category of chemical substances covered by the UNFCCC/KP. Not to be confused with CFCs.

HIPC

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries.
HIP C Initiative

A framework launched in 1996 by the World Bank and IMF with the objective of reducing the external debt of 27 HIPC s.

HLCM

High Level Committee on Management. The principal inter-agency body of the UN system for coordination on administrative and management issues.

ceb.unsystem.org/hlcm/

HLCP

High Level Committee on Programmes. The principal inter-agency body of the UN system for coordination of programmes across the UN system.

ceb.unsystem.org/hlcp/

HONLEA

(CND) Regional meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies. A subsidiary body of CND.

host (country) Government

1. The Government of the country in which an international organization is located or in which an international conference takes place.
2. The Government of a country organizing a conference.
**host country agreement**

The agreement between a host country Government and an international organization providing immunities and privileges and other administrative arrangements for the organization and delegations attending its meetings.

**HRC**

UN Human Rights Committee. Composed of eighteen experts elected in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Not to be confused with CHR. www.ohchr.org

**humanitarian coordinator (HC)**

(DPKO) In the context of peacekeeping operations, responsible for planning and coordination of humanitarian operations.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**IADB**

Inter-American Development Bank. The regional development bank for Latin America and the Caribbean.

www.iadb.org

**IAEA**

International Atomic Energy Agency (in Vienna). Not a specialized agency, but it reports annually to the GA and occasionally to the SC.

www.iaea.org

**IBE and ICE**

1. International Bureau of Education. The name of a pre-existing international organization that merged with UNESCO, now applied to an international centre for comparative education in Geneva which is an autonomous body that is also an integral part of UNESCO. It organizes regular International Conferences on Education (ICE).

www.ibe.unesco.org

2. Anglicized form of BIE.

**IBRD**

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. One of the specialized agencies. Its members are members of the IMF which have accepted the IBRD Articles.

www.worldbank.org
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**ICAO**

International Civil Aviation Organization. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Montreal.

[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

**ICC**

International Criminal Court (in The Hague). Any individual who has committed a crime falling under the provisions of the **Rome Statute**, which entered into force in 2002, is liable for prosecution by the Court. Not to be confused with **ICJ**.

[www.icc-cpi.int](http://www.icc-cpi.int)

**ICGFI**

International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation. An expert group established at the initiative of **WHO**, **FAO** and **IAEA**. Its **Secretariat** is the Joint FAO-IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture.

**ICJ**

International Court of Justice (in The Hague). One of the principal organs of the UN. Not to be confused with **ICC**.

[www.icj-cij.org](http://www.icj-cij.org)

**ICPD**

Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**ICPRCP**

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation, a sub-organ of the UNESCO General Conference.

**ICRC**

International Committee of the Red Cross. An independent neutral organization with a permanent mandate in international humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions. [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

**ICRCRC**

International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent on international humanitarian law and humanitarian action. Held every five years and attended by delegations from States and national Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC. A standing commission operates between conferences.

**ICSC**

International Civil Service Commission. Coordinates the conditions of service of staff in the UN common system. [www.icsc.un.org](http://www.icsc.un.org)
ICSID

International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. An independent organization closely linked to the World Bank and established under the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States of 1966.

www.worldbank.org/icsid

ICT

Information and communication technologies.

ICTP

Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics.

IDA

(World Bank) International Development Association. It provides interest-free loans and grants to the poorest developing countries.

www.worldbank.org/ida
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**IDB**

1. Islamic Development Bank. A **regional development bank** to foster the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities in accordance with the principles of Shari’ah (Islamic Law).

   www.isdb.org


   www.iadb.org

**IEA**

International Energy Agency. Created by **OECD** Member Countries committing themselves to take effective measures to meet any oil supply emergency and, over the long term, to reduce dependence on oil.

www.iea.org

**IFAD**

International Fund for Agricultural Development. One of the **specialized agencies** with headquarters in Rome.

www.ifad.org

**IFAP**

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, a sub-organ of the UNESCO **General Conference**.

www.unesco.org/webworld/ifap
IFC

International Financial Corporation. Promotes sustainable private sector investment in developing countries. Although a separate specialized agency, it is closely affiliated with the World Bank, sharing the same President and the same individuals as Governors and Directors (except in so far as some IBRD members are not members of IFC), but the IFC has its own staff.

www.ifc.org

IFCC

(G77) The Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries. Meets every two years at the senior officials’ level to review the implementation of the Caracas Programme of Action adopted by the G77 in 1981.

IFIs

International financial institutions.

IFRC

International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

www.ifrc.org

IGAD

Intergovernmental Authority for Development. The East African Economic Community which was formed in 1986.

www.igad.dj
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**IGCP**

(UNESCO) International Geological Correlations Programme, a sub-organ of the UNESCO **General Conference**.

**IHP**

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Council for the International Hydrological Programme, a sub-organ of the UNESCO **General Conference**.

**ILC**

1. **International Law Commission**.
2. The same initials are sometimes used for the **International Labour Conference**.

**ILO**

International Labour Organization. One of the **specialized agencies** with headquarters in Geneva.  

[www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

**IMO**

International Maritime Organization. One of the **specialized agencies** with headquarters in London.  

[www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

**IMPACT Project**

(WIPO) A project to fully automate the operation of the **PCT**.
Impasse

(Negotiation) A point beyond which progress is not possible.

In extenso

In full; how a statement is to be recorded in the summary records or conference report (Latin).

INC

Intergovernmental negotiating committee.

INCB

International Narcotics Control Board.

INFCIRC

(IAEA) Information circular.

Informal consultations

1. Exchanges of views among delegations which may extend to attempts at mutual persuasion or to informal negotiation and which take place outside the formal conference debate.
2. A meeting convened for the purpose of an informal exchange of views. At such a meeting the rules of procedure of the conference do not apply; there is normally no record and no interpretation.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

Informal Consultations Other Than Those of the Whole

(Security Council) Refers to consultations, such as the ‘group of friends’ and the ‘contact group’, usually formed around a specific issue. The group of friends is the venue where an issue is introduced to those interested. The contact group usually takes an active role in the implementation of Council decisions on that issue.

informal contact group

Established for representatives of different caucuses or delegates to meet privately to discuss specific agenda items or issues, bridge differences and achieve consensus. In some negotiating forums, observers may be invited to attend such groups.

informal informals

(UN New York) Informal consultations so-called to distinguish them from those formally convened and notified in the Journal of the United Nations.

inhumane weapons

See CCW Convention.
INSRAW

UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, (in Santo Domingo) guided by a Board of Trustees appointed by ECOSOC.

www.un-instraw.org

instrument of ratification

A document signed by a head of State or minister of foreign affairs, which legally binds a State to a treaty and its obligations once the treaty has entered into force.

intergovernmental agreement

So-called to differentiate it from a ‘treaty’ or ‘international agreement’ which is only between or among States.

intergovernmental negotiating committee

An ad hoc forum for the purpose of negotiating an international legal instrument, such as a framework convention.

International Bureau

(UPU) Secretariat of the Union.

international civil servant

A member of the staff of the UN or another international organization who has an international legal status.
international financial institutions

Sometimes used to mean the IMF and the World Bank Group, but sometimes extended to include the regional development banks, the GEF and even the BIS.

International Labour Conference

The annual conference of the Member States of ILO.

International Labour Office

The Secretariat of the ILO.

International Law Commission

Composed of 34 members elected by the GA. It promotes the progressive development of international law and its codification.

www.un.org/law/ilc

International Narcotics Control Board

A quasi judicial control organ for the implementation of the United Nations drug conventions. Its thirteen members are elected by ECOSOC and serve in their personal capacities.

www.incb.org

INTERPOL

International Criminal Police Organization based in Lyon.

www.interpol.int
**interpretation**

A simultaneous oral translation of a statement made at a meeting. This term is also used in its everyday and legal meanings.

**intervene, intervention**

When a delegate, having been given permission to speak by the presiding officer, makes a statement, he or she ‘intervenes’ in the debate. His or her statement is an ‘intervention’.

**IOC**

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, a sub-organ of UNESCO General Conference.

**IOM**

International Organization for Migration.  
[www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

**IOR-ARC**

Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.

**IPCC**

(WMO/UNEP) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.  
Established by WMO and UNEP to assess scientific, technical, socio-economic impacts on climate change.  
[www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**IPDC**

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development Communications, a sub-organ of **UNESCO General Conference**.

**IPRs**

Intellectual property rights.

**ISA**

International Seabed Authority (in Kingston). An autonomous international organization established under **UNCLOS**.

www.isa.org.jm

**ISO**

International Organization for Standardization (in Geneva). An international **non-governmental organization**.

www.iso.org

**IT**

Information technology.

**ITC**

International Trade Centre (based in Geneva). The technical cooperation agency of **WTO** and **UNCTAD** for operational and enterprise-oriented aspects of international trade and development.

www.intracen.org
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**ITLOS**


www.itlos.org

**ITTA**

International Tropical Timber Agreement. Successive commodity agreements negotiated under **UNCTAD**, the last of which entered into force in 1997. See **ITTO**.

**ITTO**

International Tropical Timber Organization (in Yokohama). Services the **ITTA**.

www.itto.or.jp

**ITU**

International Telecommunication Union. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Geneva.

www.itu.int

**IUCN**

The World Conservation Union (in Gland, Switzerland). Formerly the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. An organization composed of States, government agencies and **NGOs**.

www.iucn.org
IWC


www.iwcoffice.org
Joint Inspection Unit

Established by and reporting to the GA but whose mandate covers the whole UN system. Based in Geneva.

JI

(UNFCCC/KP) Joint Implementation. One of the three mechanisms for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

JIU

Joint Inspection Unit.

Journal of the United Nations

(UN New York) A calendar of UN meetings, agendas and events (including unofficial meetings) in New York and issued daily in English and French.


JUSCANZ/JUSSCANNZ

A caucus group that makes joint statements in the climate change (and other environmental) negotiations. The composition of this group has evolved and now includes Japan, US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand. Depending on the issues and the forum, a number of other delegations may participate, including Iceland, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Russia and others.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

K

killer amendment

(Informal) An amendment that changes the meaning of the original text in such a way that if it is adopted, the original text would become meaningless.

KP

Kyoto Protocol.

Kyoto Protocol

(UNFCCC) Provides for binding emission reductions for Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC. Entered into force in 2005.

www.unfccc.int
L
document

See **limited document**.

**language**

(Negotiation) A set of words, a formulation. As in ‘I propose alternative language for this paragraph’.

**LDCs**

**Least Developed Countries**.

**LDC Fund**

(UNFCCC) Established by the **COP** to assist **LDCs** to undertake programmes of action to adapt to climate change.

**LDC Group**

A **G77** subgroup now numbering 50 least developed States and which caucuses widely in UN and other forums.

**LDC Expert Group (LEG)**

(UNFCCC) A panel of twelve experts providing advice to **LDCs** on the preparation and implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (**NAPAs**).
lead sponsor

One of the co-sponsors that takes responsibility for tabling a resolution.

Least Developed Countries

The countries lowest on the scale of development according to low income, human resource weakness and economic vulnerability criteria.

www.un.org/ohrlls/

least formals or informal, informals informals

The most informal of meetings. These meetings take place between two or more delegates in various contexts outside of a session. As contrasted with informal consultations which have a residual element of formality in that they are convened.

like-minded group

Group of delegations which share a common view on a body of issues considered at an international conference. They often make group statements or work together to develop proposals to be advanced in the name of their group. As like-mindedness is issue specific, there are different like-minded groups in different conferences.
Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries

(CBD) A caucus group of megadiverse developing countries that collectively account for 70 per cent of the world’s biodiversity. The group formed in 2002 with the aim to leverage negotiating strength in the field of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing (ABS).

limited document

Document of a temporary nature, notably draft resolutions or decisions. Documents in this category are identified with the letter L.

LLDC

1. Landlocked Developing Countries. A caucus group which meets annually at the ministerial level.
2. (WTO & UNCTAD) Previously these initials were used for least developed countries, but these organizations now use the same abbreviation as other UN bodies (i.e. LDCs).

LMMC

Like-Minded Megadiverse Countries.

LMG

Like-minded group.

LMO

(Cartagena Protocol) Living modified organism.
Lomé Convention

Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries, adopted in 1975 and subsequently renegotiated four times (Lomé II, III, IV and the Cotonou Agreement in 2000). Under this agreement, ACP countries benefit from non-reciprocal trade preferences with the EU. This regime will be replaced by EPAs by 2008.

London Convention


www.londonconvention.org

Low hanging fruit

(Negotiation) ‘Picking the low hanging fruit’ means securing agreement on matters which can readily be agreed before attempting negotiation on more difficult matters.

Lowest common denominator

(Negotiation) Smallest issue/set of issues on which a conference, meeting, etc. can agree. See convoy problem.

LRTAP


http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**LTP**
(WMO) Long-term Plan.

**LULUCF**
(UNFCCC) Land-use, land-use change and forestry.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

M

MAB

(UNESCO) International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere, a sub-organ of the UNESCO General Conference.

main committee

(In large conferences only) A committee established to address part of the agenda of the conference (the other parts being allocated to one or more other main committees). The term distinguishes main committees from those with more restricted mandates. There are six Main Committees in the GA.

major donors

A caucus group composed of at least some of the larger contributors to the budget of an organization or programme.

major groups

(UNDESA) A category of non-governmental actors identified during the prep-com sessions of the 1992 UNCED. There are nine groups: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technical community and farmers.

www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroupsMain.htm
mandate
1. (Noun) What a conference, organization or individual has been given authority or purpose to do. ‘Remit’ is a synonym.
2. (Verb) To give authority or purpose to a conference, an organization or an individual.
3. (Adjective: mandated) Who or which has been given authority or purpose.

MARPOL

Marrakesh Accords
1. (WTO) The agreements bringing to a conclusion the Uruguay Round and establishing the WTO.
2. (UNFCCC) A series of decisions adopted at COP7 in relation to the Kyoto Protocol, including emissions trading, CDM, and the establishment of capacity development funds.

MAT
(Cartagena Protocol) Mutually agreed terms.

MDGs
Millennium Development Goals. Eight quantified targets for making substantial progress by 2015 towards the elimination of poverty, to which the 191 Member States committed themselves at the Millennium Summit.

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

MEA
1. Multilateral environmental agreement. A generic term for multilateral treaties relating to the environment.
   www.millenniumassessment.org

meeting
1. The conference (as in ‘the meeting decided…’).
2. The conference as one in a series of conferences (as in ‘the 2004 meeting of the World Health Assembly’).
3. A particular day or half day of the conference, (as in ‘this morning’s meeting’). ‘Session’ is a synonym for 2 and 3; ‘sitting’ is a synonym for 3.

Meeting of members of the Security Council
Not a meeting of the Security Council, but an informal meeting of the members to consult with dignitaries from Member States and possibly other representatives from outside the Council.

Megadiverse Countries
(IUCN) Seventeen developed and developing countries identified by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in 2000 which account for 70 per cent of the world’s biodiversity. Not identical to the membership of LMMC.
**Member State/Country**
A State which is a member of an organization, usually as a result of its being a party to the treaty establishing the organization. Some organizations use the term Member Country.

**memorandum of understanding**
An informal type of international instrument which does not require ratification. Used more frequently in bilateral agreements. See United Nations Treaty Collection - Treaty Reference Guide.

untreaty.un.org/

**MERCOSUR**
Contraction of the Spanish for ‘Common Market of the South’. The customs union created by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in 1991.

www.mercosur.org

**MFA**
Multifibre Arrangement. The predecessor to WTO’s Agreement on Textiles and Clothing.

**MFN**
(International trade) Most-favoured-nation. A fundamental principle requiring a party not to discriminate between or among trading partners.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**Miami Group**

(Cartagena Protocol) A *caucus group* comprising essentially Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, the United States and Uruguay, which are large, grain-exporting countries and have invested considerably in genetic engineering.

**microcredit**

A small amount of money loaned to a client by a bank or other institution.

**microfinance**

Funding for very small-scale commercial enterprises.

**microphone**

(Informal) Permission (from the *presiding officer*) to speak, as in ‘several *delegates* were asking for the microphone’. The reference is to the microphone at each delegation’s desk which is only switched on when the presiding officer has given that delegate permission to address the conference.

**MIF**

(IADB) Multilateral Investment Fund. A fund to assist private sector development in Latin America and the Caribbean with a special emphasis on micro-enterprise and small business.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**MIGA**

Multilateral Investments Guarantee Agency. An independent organization closely linked to the World Bank which acts as insurer to private investors and adviser to countries on foreign investment, with a view to assisting development in the developing countries.

www.miga.org

**Millennium Development Declaration and Millenium Summit**

At the Millenium Summit in 2000, 191 governments committed themselves, through the Millenium Development Declaration, to an agenda for the elimination of global poverty, notably through the implementation of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

un.org/millenniumgoals/

**Mine Ban Treaty**

See Ottawa Convention.

**MINUCI**

(DPKO) UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minuci/

**MINURSO**

(DPKO) UN Mission for the Referendum in Southern Sahara.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minurso/
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

MINUSTAH
(DPKO) UN Stabilization Mission in Haïti.
www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/minustah/

Montreal Protocol

MONUC
(DPKO) UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
www.monuc.org/

Monterey Conference
Shorthand for the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterey, Mexico, in 2002.
www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdconf/

Monterey Consensus
The outcome of the Monterey Conference.
MOP

Meeting of the parties. Equivalent to conference of the parties (COP), the difference is only a matter of the precise wording of particular treaties. In the major environmental instruments, for example, COP tends to be used for the convention itself and MOP for the protocols to those conventions. See COP/MOP.

MOST

1. (UNESCO) Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Social Sciences, a sub-organ of the UNESCO General Conference.
2. In some countries, an abbreviation for the Ministry of Science and Technology.

motion

A formal proposal made orally on a matter of procedure, e.g. a motion to suspend the meeting.

move (verb)

(Debate) To formally propose that the conference take a particular action. (Used only of procedural motions).

MPPI

(Basel Convention) Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**Multilateral Fund**

(Montreal Protocol) Shorthand for the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the **Montreal Protocol**. Provides funds to assist developing countries to implement the Montreal Protocol.

[www.multilateralfund.org](http://www.multilateralfund.org)

**mutatis mutandis**

Upon changing what is required, e.g. ‘the rules of procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the protocol (...)’ (Latin).

**MYFF**

(UNDP) Multi-Year Funding Framework.

**MYPOW**

(CBD and UNFF) Multi-Year Programme of Work.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

N

NAFTA
North American Free Trade Agreement. www.nafta-sec-alena.org

NAM
Non-Aligned Movement.

NAPAs
(UNFCCC) National Adaptation Programmes of Action. Prepared by LDC Parties on urgent activities to cope with climate change.

national focal points
See focal points.

NATO
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**NCSA**

National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management. Launched by the **GEF** in 2001, NCSAs aim to provide countries with priority capacity needs on crosscutting global environment issues.

**Negative Security Guarantees/Negative Security Assurances**

(Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament) Assurances given by nuclear-armed States that they will not use or threaten to use these weapons against States which do not posses nuclear weapons. The assurances can be unilateral or contained in treaties, notably **protocols** to **NWFZ** treaties.

**NEPAD**


[www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org)

**New Agenda Coalition**

(Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament) A group of 'middle power' **delegations** which aim to promote nuclear disarmament. Members are Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden.
New Zealand Handbook

The United Nations Handbook published each year by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade which provides information on the aims, structure and membership of the many bodies of the United Nations.

NFAPs

(WIPO) Nationally Focused Action Plans (for assistance to developing countries).

NGLS

Non-governmental Liaison Service. A service that promotes dialogue and cooperation on development issues between NGOs and the UN. www.un-ngls.org

NGO

Non-governmental organization.

NGO Liaison Office

Established in New York, Geneva (UNOG), Vienna (UNOV) and Nairobi (UNON) to serve as a focal point for all matters pertaining to relations between the United Nations and NGOs, particularly with respect to the consultative relationship with ECOSOC. Among other activities, the office maintains a database and publishes a list of NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**NMHS**

(WMO) National Meteorological and Hydrological Service (of the Member States).

**NNWS**

(NPT) All States Parties to the NPT other than those which possessed nuclear weapons in 1968.

**no action motion**

A procedural motion permitted by the rules of procedure of some conferences that the conference take no action (i.e. no decision) on a draft resolution or other proposal before it. If adopted, this has the same effect as defeating the draft resolution or proposal.

**Non-Aligned Movement**

A group formed in 1955 of countries that were not allied to either the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Has continued as a caucus group of 115 developing countries on issues related to international security with the aim of developing common positions. China is not formally a member of the NAM but attends its meetings and usually supports its positions.

**Non-Consultative Party**

(Antarctic Treaty) A party to the Treaty which is not entitled to participate in decision-making in the ATCM. Consultative status is linked to the scale of scientific research undertaken in Antarctica.
non-governmental organization (NGO)

Often applied exclusively to community groups and not-for-profit organizations but strictly speaking (and in the UN system) also includes businesses and business associations. The rules of procedure or other decisions of most conferences specify the status NGOs may be granted. They can be full members of some organizations and their conferences, alongside Member States (e.g. IUCN and the ICRC); more frequently they are restricted to the status of observers and in some cases have restrictions placed on their access and participation. ECOSOC has a formal system for granting a consultative status to NGOs which meet certain criteria. A number of NGOs work closely with specialized agencies and other UN bodies, notably as implementing agencies.

non-paper

A text distributed on an informal basis and designed to facilitate the process of negotiating an agreement. The word emphasizes the informal nature of the text: it is not a proposal (although it may foreshadow one) and does not engage its author. See working paper.

non-party

A State that is not a party to a treaty but attends meetings or conferences of that instrument as an observer. Sometimes referred to as a non-party observer.
**non-recorded vote**

A vote in which the official *records* or *conference report* record the outcome of the vote in numerical terms but not the way each *delegation* voted.

**Nordic Group**

An electoral sub-group within *WEOG*. Its members also *caucus* and make joint statements in some conferences.

**not financial/non-financial**

Colloquial expression meaning that the sending government of a *delegation* is in arrears for paying its contributions due to an organization or conference, e.g. at the UN, the *GA* may decide that such a Member State shall have no right to vote.

**note verbale**

The standard format for formal communications through diplomatic channels, including between missions and international organizations.

**notification**

A formal communication of a legal character between a State and an intergovernmental organization or *secretariat* of a convention. See United Nations Treaty Collection - Treaty Reference Guide.  

UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**NPT**


**NSG**

(Nuclear non-proliferation) **Nuclear Suppliers’ Group.**

**NSGs**

(Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament) **Negative Security Guarantees.**

**Nuclear Suppliers’ Group**

(Nuclear non-proliferation) A group of Governments seeking to assist nuclear non-proliferation by applying guidelines to exports of nuclear material and/or potentially relevant equipment.

[www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org](http://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org)

**Nuclear Weapon Free Zone**

(Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament) An area within which the possession and deployment of nuclear weapons are prohibited, and various other nuclear activities regulated by multilateral treaty. To date six **NWFZs** have been established, covering approximately 60 per cent of the planet.
number 2 ambassador

(Informal) A deputy head of mission who happens to carry the rank of ambassador.

NWFZ

Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

NWS

(NPT) Nuclear Weapon States, i.e. the five States which had nuclear weapons in 1968.
objection

1. A statement, either written or oral, by a State or delegation informing the organization, conference or meeting that it objects to a proposed action or commitment.
2. (IWC and some other conferences) A formal process whereby a Member State may dissociate itself from a decision of the IWC/conference and not be bound by that decision.

observer or observer delegation

A delegation that has only limited rights to participate in a conference. It may represent a State or other entity that is not a party to the relevant treaty. Observer delegations are often further sub-divided into categories such as Member States, non-member States, international organizations and NGOs, and seated accordingly. In all cases observers may not participate in decision-making and are not bound by any decisions taken by the conference. In some cases, the rules of procedure define observers and the extent of their right to participate in conferences. In some conferences this is minimal; in others it is extensive. For example, in the CHR, State observer delegations may co-sponsor resolutions.

OCHA

(UN Secretariat) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

ochaonline.un.org
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**ODCCP**


[www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

**ODS**

2. (Montreal Protocol) Ozone depleting substance.

**OECD**

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. An organization of 30 Member Countries, with headquarters in Paris. The members of OECD *caucus* as a group in some conferences.

[www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

**Official Document System (ODS)**

Electronic repository for official documents published by the UN. Includes the official records version of resolutions of the GA, SC, ECOSOC and Trusteeship Council.


**OHCHR**

Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (in Geneva).

[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**OHR**
Office of the High Representative and **EU** Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

www.ohr.int

**OHRRLLS**
(UN Secretariat) Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (**LDC**), Landlocked Developing Countries (**LLDC**) and Small Island Developing States (**SIDS**).

www.un.org/org/ohrlls

**OIC**
Organization of the Islamic Conference. Not to be confused with **IOC**.

www.oic-oci.org

**OIOS**
(UN Secretariat) Office of Internal Oversight Services.

www.un.org/Depts/oios

**OLA**
(UN Secretariat) Office of Legal Affairs.

**ONUB**
(DPKO) United Nations Operation in Burundi.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/onub/
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**OPANAL**

Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The implementing agency of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

[www.opanal.org](http://www.opanal.org)

**OPEC**

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. An organization based in Vienna, grouping eleven governments and which seeks to achieve stable oil prices.


**OPEC Fund**

A multilateral fund to cooperate with developing countries.


**OPCW**

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (in The Hague), the implementing agency for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

[www.opcw.org](http://www.opcw.org)

**open briefing**

(Security Council) A public meeting at which the Council receives a briefing from a Special Envoy of the Secretary General, the Director-General of the IAEA or another official.
open debate
(Security Council) A public meeting of the Council where non-members may address members on issues before them. All non-members of the Council may participate without the right to vote, under rules 37 or 39 of the Council’s provisional Rules of Procedure.

open meeting
(Security Council) A meeting of the Council open to the public.

order, call to
A direction by the presiding officer that the conference or a particular delegate should be silent (so as to allow the conference proceedings to take place in an orderly manner). To ‘recall delegates to order’ means to silence them when they are out of order.

order, out of
Not (behaving) in accordance with the rules of procedure.

orientation debate
(Security Council) A meeting of the Council where non-members are consulted before the Council proceeds to take action.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**OSART**

(IAEA) Operational Safety Review Team.

**OSG**

(UN Secretariat) Office of the **Secretary-General**.

www.un.org/news/ossg/sg

**Ottawa Convention**

Shorthand for the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer or Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, also known as the **Mine Ban Treaty**. Entered into force in 1999.

**Ozone Secretariat**

Based in Nairobi, it services the **Vienna Convention** and the **Montreal Protocol**.

www.unep.org/ozone
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

P

P5

1. The Permanent Five. The five States which have permanent seats on the Security Council. By tradition in most conferences, the P5 are never elected as presiding officers, although they may occupy that position as a result of a rotating chairmanship.

Pacific Group

A like-minded caucus group that makes joint statements in some conferences on a variety of issues. It consists of the Pacific Island States, Australia and New Zealand.

package

(Negotiation) Several elements which cannot be separated and which have to be accepted or rejected as a whole.

Palais des Nations

The main UN conference facility and office complex in Geneva.
Multilateral Conferences and Diplomacy

**parallel events**

Events organized by someone other than the organizers of an international conference to run concurrently with the conference. Parallel events are often organized by NGOs and sometimes by a government or international organization. See side events.

**parent conference/body**

The conference which established a **committee** or **working group** and to which that committee or working group must report.

**Paris Consultations**

(GEF) A formalized **contact group** to discuss such issues as future replenishments of the Facility.

**Paris Convention**

Shorthand for the Paris Convention of 1883 for the Protection of Industrial Property, one of the two cornerstones of the **WIPO Treaty System**. See **Bern Convention**.

www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/paris/

**Paris Union**

(WIPO) The International Union for the Protection of Industrial Property. See **Bern Union**.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**party**
A State, international organization or regional economic integration organization which has consented to be bound by an international instrument and for which that international instrument is in force. See *contracting party*.

**pass**
An identity document issued at *registration* and which gives access to a particular conference. Without a pass, *delegation* members may be denied entrance to the conference venue.

**PCB**
1. (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Body, the * Governing Body* of UNAIDS, elected by *ECOSOC*.
2. (Stockholm Convention) Polychlorinated biphenyls. Listed as one of the *POP*s.

**PCT**

[www.wipo.int/ipdl](http://www.wipo.int/ipdl)

**Pelindaba, Treaty of**
permanent mission

A diplomatic mission accredited to an international organization.

permanent representative (PR)

The head of a permanent mission. For some organizations the title may be different (e.g. for the IAEA, the head is a resident representative).

PFCs

Perfluorocarbons. A category of chemicals covered in the UNFCCC.

PFII

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.


PIC

1. Abbreviation for Pacific Island Countries.
2. (Rotterdam Convention) Prior informed consent.

www.pic.int/

PII

(UNESCO) Intergovernmental Committee for the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme, a sub-organ of the UNESCO General Conference.
**PKO**

Peacekeeping Operation(s) of the UN. See [DPKO](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpk).

**Plenary**

1. The whole conference meeting as such (as opposed to a committee of the whole) and therefore able to take decisions.
2. Full. (Plenary powers is another term for full powers).

**Plenipotentiary**

1. (noun) An individual who carries full powers.
2. (adjective) Said of a conference or meeting where the delegation leaders carry full powers.

**Plenipotentiary Conference**

(ITU) The general conference of the Union, held every four years.

**PLT**


**POC**

1. (CD) Point of contact
2. (UPU) The Postal Operations Council. An elected body which makes recommendations to the Council of Administration (CA).
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podium
A (usually raised) desk, facing the floor, at which the presiding officer, conference secretary and sometimes other conference officers such as the rapporteur sit.

point of contact
(CD) A delegate mandated by the chairman to lead informal consultations on a body of issues. The selection of POCs must take account of geographical equity.

point of order
A question as to whether the present proceedings are in order or whether a particular action by a delegate or a presiding officer follows the rules of procedure. Points of order request the presiding officer to exercise authority.

POPs
Persistent organic pollutants. Chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods and become widely distributed geographically. Regulated by the Stockholm Convention.

PPP
Public Private Partnership. A collaborative effort between public entities and the private sector. A key element of the UN programme for sustainable development.
précis writers

A section of a conference secretariat devoted to the preparation of summary records or other abbreviated texts.

preliminary negotiations

Negotiations that take place before and prepare the way for formal negotiations. Preliminary negotiations go beyond modalities (e.g. beyond preparatory negotiations) and may address substantive issues but not to the point of reaching final agreement.

pre-negotiation

Conclusive negotiation on the substance which takes place before formal negotiation. It is usually understood that issues settled in pre-negotiation will not be re-opened when formal negotiations start. Pre-negotiated means “settled before the formal negotiations start”.

Prep.COM CTBTO

Preparatory Committee for the (projected) CTBTO.

preparatory negotiations

Negotiations about the modalities of a future negotiation that, unlike preliminary negotiations, do not address the substance of the issues to be negotiated.
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**Prep-Com or Prepcom**
Abbreviation for preparatory committee (usually preparing for the creation of an international organization).

**Prep-Con or Prepcon**
Abbreviation for preparatory conference (usually preparing for a subsequent conference).

**pre-session documents**
Documents prepared for distribution prior to the conference or meeting. May include non-papers and miscellaneous, information and limited documents.

**president**
1. Title of the presiding officer of a major conference.
2. (GA) Elected every year on a rotating basis among the five electoral groups and presides over the regular, special and emergency special sessions.

**presiding officer**
A delegate elected by the conference to control the proceedings, to maintain order and generally to lead the work of the conference. In so doing the presiding officer acts under the authority of the conference and with its consent. Presiding officers are formally detached from their role as representative and may not speak or vote for their delegation. All interventions in a conference have to be addressed to the presiding officer. See president.
principal organs (of the UN)

The **General Assembly**, the **Security Council**, the **ECOSOC**, the **Trusteeship Council**, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the **Secretariat**.

private (closed) meeting

(Security Council) A meeting restricted to Council members and invited observers.

private (open) meeting

(Security Council) A meeting open to non-members of the Council to attend as observers.

pro tem

For the present, implicitly, a short period of time. Abbreviated from ‘*pro tempore*’ (Latin).
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**protocol**

1. Rules of diplomatic procedure, ceremony and etiquette observed by Heads of State/Government, diplomats, government dignitaries and intergovernmental organizations.
2. A department in a Government or an international secretariat that deals with relations with the missions accredited to that State or organization and with the courtesies and ceremonial afforded to visiting dignitaries.
3. An international legal agreement (e.g. treaty) appended to or otherwise closely related to another agreement. The parties to a protocol do not have to be the same as the parties to the main agreement.

**provisional agenda**

A draft agenda, not yet adopted by the conference.

**PV**

Procès verbal. Records by the conference secretariat of all statements made in a conference (French).
Quad

(WTO) A meeting of Canada, the European Union, Japan and the United States. In multilateral trade negotiations, the most contentious issues often require agreement among these four countries as a prerequisite for broader consensus across a wider spectrum of WTO Members.

quid pro quo

Something in exchange for something else (Latin).

quorum

The minimal number of delegations that must be present for a meeting to begin or for decisions to be taken. Quorum requirements are always stated in the rules of procedure.
R

R document

See restricted document.

Ramsar Convention

Shorthand for the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Adopted at Ramsar, Iran and entered into force in 1975. COP every three years.

www.ramsar.org

rapporteur

1. A delegate elected to oversee preparation of the report of a conference.
2. An individual elected or appointed to prepare a report or a series of reports (e.g. the Special Rapporteurs appointed by the Commission on Human Rights).

Raratonga, Treaty of


ratification

See instrument of ratification.
**reading**

(Negotiation) The process of going through a text with a view to establishing which parts of it can be provisionally agreed and which, as yet, cannot. In a second reading the provisionally agreed portions of the text are not re-opened and negotiations focus on the sections as not yet agreed. Hopefully, at the end of the second reading somewhat more of the text will have been agreed and a third and, if needed, subsequent readings can further reduce the area of disagreement until a fully agreed text is achieved.

**record writers**

The staff of the conference secretariat responsible for preparing summary records.

**recorded vote**

A vote where the way in which each delegation voted is reported in the official records or conference report.

**regional commissions**

(ECOSOC) Subsidiary bodies. The five regional commissions are: ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA.

**regional development banks**

Organizations that perform a similar function to the IBRD but restricted to a particular region (there are eight). They are not part of the UN system but cooperate closely with IBRD and other UN agencies.
regional groups

Can refer to either electoral or caucus groups, although neither of these are necessarily based on geographical regions.

registration (of delegates)

Before each conference, delegation members must register with the conference secretariat and be issued a pass. To obtain a pass, delegates must present their passports and a document establishing their status as delegation members. For some conferences, members of permanent missions who are already accredited to the relevant organization do not have to register. For UN New York, see also SG.6.

representative

Every delegate is a representative of a State, international organization or NGO. Delegates usually refer to each other during formal conference debate as ‘the distinguished representative of/from (...)’.

reservation

Declarations made by a State upon signature, ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to a legal instrument, indicating that it wishes to exclude or alter the legal effect of certain provisions in their application to that State. See UN Treaty Collection - Treaty Reference Guide.
resident coordinator (RC)

Resident coordinator of the United Nations system’s operational activities for development. Responsible for planning and coordination of development operations at the country level and leader of the UN country team.

resident representative (RR)

1. The Head of the United Nations Development Programme Country Office (often also performing the role of resident coordinator).
2. For some organizations (e.g. IAEA), the title of the head of a permanent mission.

resolution

A written decision by a conference. Resolutions follow a standard format, which may vary only slightly from body to body. They consist of one sentence and a number of preambular and operative paragraphs.

restraint agreement

A (to date bilateral) agreement under which a country agrees to take measures to limit e.g. its exports to another country, in exchange for that other country not itself imposing limitations or obstacles on that trade. Sometimes called ‘voluntary restraint agreements’ (VRAs).
restricted document

A document issued by the conference secretariat which, at the time of issue, is not to be made public. Such documents are identified with the letter R.

revision or revised text

An amended version of a previously tabled document by the author(s) or sponsor(s) of that document.

right of rebuttal/reply

The rules of procedure of many conferences provide that a delegation which so requests must be given an opportunity to make a brief statement in reply to a statement made by another delegation if it believes that its own position has been misunderstood or misrepresented. Also used in practice to respond to remarks which are considered injurious.

Rio

Shorthand for the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 at which the UNFCCC and CBD were opened for signature, and Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the Forest Principles were adopted.

Rio Conventions

A group term for the UNFCCC and the CBD which were adopted at Rio. Some include UNCCD.
Rio Group

1. A group of eight countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela) established to consult over important political, economic and social issues in Latin America, and to accelerate the development of Latin American integration. Earlier known as the ‘Group of 8 Countries’.

2. (UN) The Rio Group on Poverty Statistics, an expert group, which aims to harness the experience and concerns of different groups and organizations in the world working on poverty statistics.

www.ibge.gov.br/poverty/default.htm

roll-call vote

One in which the delegations are called to vote individually, in alphabetical order. Not to be confused with ‘recorded vote’.

rolling text

(Negotiation) A text under negotiation and which is undergoing a succession of readings. It contains some elements of text which are agreed and others which are still subject to disagreement (in square brackets).

Rome Statute

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rostrum

A structure, facing the floor and equipped with a microphone, where a speaker may stand to address the conference.

rotating chairmanship or presidency

An automatic system under which delegations succeed each other in exercising the office of the presiding officer, at regular intervals, e.g. the presidency of the Security Council and of the chairmanship of CD rotate monthly, in alphabetical order.

Rotterdam Convention


www.pic.int/

Rules of procedure

A set of rules adopted by a conference to govern its workings and decision-making. Rules generally only apply to the plenary and committee meetings; informal contact groups and other similar meetings are generally not governed by the rules of procedure.
SACEP
www.sacep.org

SADC

SAARC
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, established in 1985.
www.saarc-sec.org

safeguards
1. (IAEA) A set of activities by which the IAEA attempts to verify that a State is living up to its international undertakings not to use peaceful nuclear programmes for nuclear weapons purposes.
2. (WTO) Temporary measures to assist a specified industry to adjust to heightened competition.

SAFTA
South Asian Free Trade Area. Established under the SAARC and due to enter into force in 2006.
SBI
(CBD/UNFCCC) Subsidiary Body for Implementation.

SBSTTA

SC
Security Council.

scale of assessment
An agreed formula for determining the scale of contribution due from each Member State of an organization. Typically this is proportionate to each country’s per capita GDP, with special provisions for the least developed countries.

SCAR
(Antarctic Treaty) Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research.
www.scar.org

scrutineer
An official of a conference or a delegate appointed to that role, who counts the votes or who monitors the counting of the votes cast in a secret ballot.
seat

1. Official position in an organ, organization, committee, etc. (as in ‘a permanent seat on the Security Council’ or ‘elected to sit on the ICJ’).
2. The place at a desk reserved for a particular delegation or individual. As in ‘to occupy or resume one’s seat’, meaning to sit down at one’s assigned place.

Second Committee

(GA) One of the Main Committees. Deals with economic and financial issues.

secret ballot/vote

A vote organized to ensure that each individual delegation votes remains secret. Widely used for elections.

Secretariat and conference secretariat

1. The executive and administrative staff of an international organization, organized and managed as an executive body. Every specialized agency and many UN programmes and bodies have their own secretariats.
2. However, whenever the context does not make clear that one of these is intended, the term ‘the Secretariat’ refers to the UN Secretariat, one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It is led by the Secretary-General under the direction of the Member States acting through the GA.
3. A conference secretariat is a team of officials, usually (but not necessarily) international civil servants, organized and
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managed to provide administrative and support services to an international conference. Whereas the secretariat of an agency is a permanent body, a conference secretariat exists only for the duration of its specific conference, plus any necessary preparatory and post-conference activity. The UN Secretariat provides the conference secretariat for virtually all UN conferences held in New York and for many other UN conferences held elsewhere. Likewise, the secretariats of each of the specialized agencies, UN Programmes and COPs provide the conference secretariats for conferences organized under their aegis. However, some conferences need a conference secretariat of their own to be assembled from a variety of sources.

**Secretariat of the Pacific Community**

The **Secretariat** (in Suva) of the **South Pacific Forum** and a number of other regional organizations and arrangements.

[www.spc.org.nc](http://www.spc.org.nc)

**Secretary-General**

The Head of the UN **Secretariat**.

**Security Council**

One of the **principal organs** of the UN, it has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council has fifteen members: five permanent members and ten elected by the **GA** for two-year terms.

session

A series of meetings, e.g. 'the sixtieth regular session of the GA was held in 2005'.

SG

(Informal) The Secretary-General.

SG.6 Form

(UN New York) A form issued by the Protocol and Liaison Service of the Secretariat for the accreditation and registration of delegates to meetings. It must be completed, authorized by a cover letter from the permanent mission and submitted to the Pass and Identification Office at least 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting. Each delegate needing a pass must bring a copy of the authorized SG.6 when registering.

sherpas

(Informal) The officials who meet in advance to prepare a summit conference.

show of hands

A way of voting in which delegations are invited to raise a hand (or the delegation nameplate) for ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’. A vote by show of hands is an non-recorded vote.
side events
Organized by the organizers of an international conference and taking place concurrently with the conference. Typically they may include discussion groups, seminars and informal occasions for delegates to exchange views and explore each others thinking, and/or presentations, exhibitions for their information. As opposed to parallel events, side events usually take place on the conference premises.

SIDS
Small Island Developing States. A caucus group in the sustainable development negotiations. www.sidsnet.org

single negotiated text
A draft text which compiles all the proposals into a coherent whole and provides a basis for further negotiation. See chairman’s text.

sitting
A particular day or half day of the conference. ‘Meeting’ is generally used as a synonym.

Sixth Committee
(GA) One of the Main Committees. Deals with legal issues.
SMEs
Small and medium-sized enterprises.

SNT
Single negotiated text.

South Pacific Forum
The summit level regional organization in the South Pacific, whose members are the Pacific Island Countries, Australia and New Zealand.

www.forumsec.org.fj

SPC
1. Secretariat of the Pacific Community.
2. (GA, informal) The Special Political (and Decolonization) Committee.

speakers’ list
List maintained by a presiding officer of delegations which have asked to speak, in the order in which they have made the request (subject to a few exceptions).

specialized agency
An autonomous international organization joined to the UN through a special agreement.
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Special envoy/representative

Individuals appointed by the Secretary-General who engage in preventive diplomacy and mediation in conflict and post-conflict situations, recovery operations or global issues.

Special Political (and Decolonization) Committee

(GA) One of the Main Committees. Also known as the Fourth Committee, it deals with political issues other than international security and disarmament.

special session

A session of the GA, outside and additional to its regularly scheduled sessions, focused on a particular issue or body of issues. Requires at least fourteen days notice. Other conferences may also be able to hold special sessions.

SPNFZ

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. See Raratonga, Treaty of.

Sponsor

The delegation which proposes a resolution for adoption by a conference.
**SPREP**

South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.  
[www.sprep.org.ws](http://www.sprep.org.ws)

**SR**

**Summary records.**

**SRSG**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General.  
Appointed by the Secretary-General and responsible for overall mission coordination.

**stalemate**

(Negotiation) A point at which negotiations make no progress and no solution is in sight.

**stalled**

(Negotiation) A point at which negotiations are making no progress. The implication, however, is that this may be temporary, not a break down or stalemate.

**STAP**

(GEF) Science and Technology Advisory Panel.
statement of explanation or by way of explanation

The statement made by a delegation exercising its right of rebuttal (most rules of procedure strictly limit the duration of such statements).

status quo (ante)

The way things are (were before a certain event) (Latin).

steering committee

A restricted committee which plans the work of a major conference. It deals exclusively with procedural matters.

Stockholm

Shorthand for the UN Conference on the Human Environment of 1972. It was the beginning of UN activity in relation to the environment and development. It adopted a declaration, including 26 principles, and an action plan.

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants


www.pops.int
straw poll

(Elections) An initial round of voting, the result of which is not recorded.

Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East

A subsidiary body of the CND.

sub-committee

A committee created by another (parent) committee. Often the chairman of a sub-committee is appointed by the parent committee, not elected by the sub-committee itself.

sub-organ

(UNESCO) One of a number of intergovernmental bodies which are subsidiary to the UNESCO General Conference.

subsidiary body/organ

A committee or working group or even a small organization, created by and reporting to another organization or conference.
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**summary records (SR) of the debate**

(GA and some other major conferences) Written by the conference secretariat and later published as a conference document. They are not adopted by the conference. Delegations may suggest corrections to the SR of their own statements, but amendments which are clearly at variance with what was said or which would add to the length or change the balance of the SR are not accepted.

**summit**

Conference at which the participants are Heads of State or Government.
table (verb)
To lodge the text with the conference secretariat for distribution to all delegations and to make an intervention recommending its adoption by the conference, e.g. to table a draft resolution or to table a draft treaty.

tally
The count of positive and negative votes and abstentions.

TDB
(UNCTAD) Trade and Development Board, the Executive Committee of UNCTAD.

terminal dues
(UPU) Payments made to a postal administration to compensate it for an imbalance between the volume of incoming and outgoing mail.

Third Committee
(GA) One of the Main Committees. Deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues.
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**Thirty Eighth floor**

(Informal, UN New York) The floor on which the Office of the Secretary-General of the UN is located. By extension, his office and the senior leadership of the Secretariat.

**TK**

Traditional Knowledge. Refers to knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities, although the definition of TK may vary among organizations and conferences.

**Tlatelolco, Treaty of**


**TLT**


**TRAINS**

(UNCTAD) Trade Analysis and Information System. A comprehensive computer-based information system on trade control measures that uses UNCTAD’s database.
transparency

1. The principle that public affairs are on a sounder basis when they are conducted openly.
2. The degree to which a process is open to scrutiny, e.g. ‘the treaty provides for greater transparency in (…)’.

travaux préparatoires

Preparatory work. Covers the record of negotiations and all other documents which may be of evidentiary value in establishing the meaning of an international treaty (French).

TRIMS

(WTO) Trade-Related Investment Measures.

TRIPS


Tripartite structure

(ILO) Refers to the unique three-party structure of the ILC comprising representatives governments, employers and workers.

Trusteeship Council

One of the principal organs of the UN. It suspended its operations with the independence of the last remaining United Nations trust territory, Palau, in 1994.
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**TSAG**

(ITU) Telecommunications Standardization Advisory Group.

**Turtle Bay**

The geographical place name for the site of the UN headquarters building in New York.

**Type II Outcome/Type II Partnership**

(WSSD) One of the two outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) and taking the form of voluntary multistakeholder partnerships which contribute to the implementation of intergovernmental commitments.
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**U**

**UDRP**
(WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Centre) Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy.

**UMA**
Union du Maghreb Arabe. The economic community for the Maghreb region (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) founded in 1989.
www.maghrebarabe.org/

**Umbrella Group**
(UNFCCC/KP) A caucus group in the climate change negotiations composed of Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States.

**UNAIDS**
United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Jointly sponsored by nine UN agencies. **Secretariat** in Geneva.
www.unaids.org

**UNAMA**
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
www.unama.afg.org
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**UNAMSIL**

(DPKO) United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.  
www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamsil

**unanimously or by unanimity**

Said of a conference decision taken with the support of all **delegations** (established by a **show of hands** or other form of voting, or by the **presiding officer** asking: ‘Are we all agreed?’ and no dissent being expressed.). Contrast with **consensus**, the more common form of decision-making.

**UNCC**

United Nations Compensation Commission. Established by the **Security Council** to process claims and pay compensation for losses resulting from Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

**UNCCD**

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, especially in Africa. Entered into force in 1996.  
www.unccd.int
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

UNCED

UNCITRAL

www.uncitral.org

UNCLOS

www.un.org/Depts/los

UNCOPUOS
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (in Vienna). A subsidiary body of the GA.

www.oosa.unvienna.org/COPUOS/copuos.html

UNCTAD
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. A subsidiary body under the GA, promoting the integration of developing countries into the world economy. Secretariat in Geneva.

www.unctad.org
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**UNDCP**

United Nations International Drug Control Programme, part of ODCCP.

www.unodc.org

**UNDESA**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

www.un.org/esa/desa.htm

**UNDG**

United Nations Development Group. An instrument for UN reform created by the Secretary-General in 1997 to bring together operational agencies in the UN System working on development and MDGs.

www.undg.org

**UNDOF**


www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/undof

**UNDP**

United Nations Development Programme (in New York). The main body responsible for coordinating UN development work.

www.undp.org
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**UNEP**

United Nations Environment Programme (in Nairobi).

www.unep.org

**UNESCO**


www.unesco.org

**UNFCCC**


www.unfccc.int

**UNFF**

United Nations Forum on Forests.

www.un.org/esa/forests/

**UNFICYP**

(DPKO) United Nations Force in Cyprus.

www.unficyp.org

**UNFPA**


www.unfpa.org

164
UNGA
United Nations General Assembly. See GA.
www.un.org/ga

UN-HABITAT
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (in Nairobi).
www.unhabitat.org

UNHCR
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The UN Refugee Agency based in Geneva.
www.unhcr.ch

UNICEF
www.unicef.org

UNICRI
United Nations International Crime and Justice Research Institute (in Turin). The research arm of the UN in this field.
www.unicri.org

UNIDIR
www.unidir.org
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**UNIDO**

United Nations Industrial Development Organization. One of the **specialized agencies** with headquarters in Vienna.

www.unido.org

**UNIFEM**


www.unifem.undp.org

**UNIFIL**

(DPKO) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unifil/

**UNITAR**

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (in Geneva). Aims to enhance the effectiveness of the UN and its Member States through appropriate training and research.

www.unitar.org

**UNMEE**


www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmee/

**UNMIK**

(DPKO) United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

www.unmikonline.org
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**UNMIL**


www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmil/

**UNMIS**

(DPKO) United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmis/

**UNMISET**


www.unmiset.org

**UNMOGIP**

(DPKO) United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, relating to the ceasefire in Kashmir.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmogip/

**UNMOVIC**

United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. Mandated to verify Iraq’s compliance with its obligation to be rid of weapons of mass destruction.

www.unmovic.org/
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

**UNOCI**

United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire.


**UNO**

An incorrect abbreviation for the United Nations (organization). *ONU*, however, is correct in French and Spanish.

**UNODC**

UN Office for Drugs Control and Crime Prevention (in Vienna).

[www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

**UNOG**

United Nations Office at Geneva. Housed in the **Palais des Nations**. UNOG is the representative office of the **Secretary-General** at Geneva.

[www.unog.ch](http://www.unog.ch)

**UNOMIG**

(DPKO) United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia.

UNON
United Nations Office at Nairobi. UNON is the representative office of the Secretary-General at Nairobi.
www.unon.org

UNOPS
United Nations Office for Project Services.
www.unops.org

UNOSAT
A United Nations initiative to provide the humanitarian community with satellite imagery and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/

UNOTIL
United Nations Office in Timor-Leste. A special political, follow-up mission to UNMISET.
www.unmiset.org

UNOV
United Nations Office at Vienna. UNOV is the representative office of the Secretary-General at Vienna.
www.unvienna.org/unov/index.html
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

UNPOB

United Nations Political Office in Bougainville.

UNRISD


www.unrisd.org

UNRWA

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, with headquarters in Amman.

www.un.org/unrwa

UNSCEAR

United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. A subsidiary body of the GA.

www.unscear.org

UNSCO

Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East.

www.un.org/unsco/
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**UNSECOORD**


**UNSSOD**

*Special Session(s) of UNGA* on arms control and disarmament. UNSSOD1 was held in 1978, UNSSOD2 in 1982 and UNSSOD3 in 1988.

**UNTSO**

(DPKO) United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. Since 1949, supervises the armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/untso

**UNU**

United Nations University (in Tokyo). Contributes to resolving pressing global problems through research and capacity building.

www.unu.edu

**UNV**

United Nations Volunteers programme serviced by a Secretariat in Bonn. Operates under overall administration of UNDP and funded by voluntary contributions.

www.unvolunteers.org
UPC

1. Universal Postal Congress. The five-yearly General Conference of UPU.
2. The Universal Postal Convention of 1875.

UPOV

International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. Although not a UN body, it works in very close cooperation with WIPO.

www.upov.int

UPU

Universal Postal Union. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Bern.

www.upu.int

Uruguay Round

(GATT) Multilateral trade negotiations which concluded in 1995. One of its results was the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO). See Marrakesh Accords.

USG

Under Secretary-General. The third highest rank in the UN Secretariat. See DSG.
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VDPA


verbatim

Word-for-word, in full. How a statement is to be reproduced in the official records or conference report (Latin).

verbatim records

(Only at some major conferences) Verbatim (i.e. full) records of all statements made in a conference. Prepared by the conference secretariat.

VIC

Vienna International Centre, where UNOV, UNIDO, IAEA and other organizations are located.
Vienna Convention

A number of Conventions have been signed in Vienna.
1. The one most frequently known by this title is the 1969 Convention on the Law of Treaties.
2. Also particularly relevant to the UN system is the 1975 Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of Universal Character.
waiver

An agreed exemption, usually for a specified period, from an otherwise agreed obligation. Usually applies to one measure or one aspect of a measure within an agreement involving many measures. An example would be a temporary dispensation allowed to one party to a treaty to postpone implementation of one element of the treaty for a specified number of years.

Washington Consensus

(Informal) A set of economic policy themes which the Washington-based international financial institutions have advocated, sometimes as a pre-requisite for loans to developing countries.

Wassenaar Arrangement

A forum in which participating States discuss export controls on conventional weapons and dual use goods and technologies. It has a Secretariat in Vienna.

www.wassenaar.org
WCAR

World Conference Against Racism. The last conference took place in Durban in 2001.

WCMC


www.unep-wcmc.org/

WCO

World Customs Organization (in Brussels). An intergovernmental body dedicated to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administration.

www.wcoomd.org

WCT

WIPO Copyright Treaty of 2002.

www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/wct/

weighted voting

A system in which the votes of different delegations are not equal but instead counted with reference to an agreed formula. In the World Bank Board of Directors, for example, the weighting reflects the number of shares held by the countries concerned.
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**WEOG**

Western European and Others Group. An *electoral group* in UNGA and some other New York-based conferences. Includes Western and Central European Member States, as well as Australia, Canada, Israel (granted temporary membership in 2000), New Zealand and the United States. WEOG does not function as a *caucus group*.

**Western Group**

A *caucus group* composed of the members of WEOG, minus Israel and plus Japan, which meets in many conferences but does not usually adopt common positions or make *group statements*.

**WFP**

United Nations World Food Programme (in Rome).

[www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

**WHA**

World Health Assembly. The *General Conference* of the World Health Organization, held every two years.
**WHC**


**WHO**

World Health Organization. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Geneva. [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

**WHYCOS**

(WMO) World Hydrological Cycle Observing System.

**WIPO**

World Intellectual Property Organization. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Geneva. [www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)

**WMC**

World Meteorological Congress. The General Conference of the WMO.

**WMD**

Weapons of mass destruction.
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**WMO**
World Meteorological Organization. One of the specialized agencies with headquarters in Geneva.

www.wmo.org

**Worker Delegate**
(ILO) The member of a Member State delegation to the International Labour Conference who represents the workers of that State. Each delegation to this Conference consists of two delegates appointed by the Government and two others nominated in agreement with the most representative national organizations of employers and of workers respectively.

**working group (WG)**
A sub-committee, so-called to emphasize the point that it has a very specific and usually time-bound task.

**working languages**
The languages in which interventions may be made or texts may be circulated and considered. Although the UN has six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), many organizations and conferences limit themselves to working in only two or three of these.
working paper (WP)

An informal paper for use in a conference. Their distribution is normally limited to participants in the conference. Usually a working paper is more substantive and less ephemeral than a CRP and less specific to a particular delegation than a non-paper.

working the corridors

(Informal) Engaging intensively in a large number of informal discussions, usually with a view to gathering support for a proposal.

World Bank

The IBRD and the IDA. www.worldbank.org

World Bank Group


World Meteorological Congress

(WMO) The general conference of the Organization.

WPPT

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**WSSD**

World Summit on Sustainable Development. Held in Johannesburg in 2002 with the aim of furthering the implementation of *Agenda 21*.

**WSIS**

World Summit on the Information Society. Convened in two parts (Geneva, 2003; and Tunis, 2005) with the aim to take action on Internet governance and bridging the digital divide. www.itu.int/wsis

**WTO**

1. World Trade Organization, established by the *Marrakesh Accords*. www.wto.org

2. The same initials are also sometimes (but not in this glossary) used for the World Tourism Organization, another of the *specialized agencies*.

**WTO/OMT**

Zangger Committee

(NPT) A forum to assist Parties to the NPT to harmonize their export regimes, so as to fulfil their obligations under Art III.2 of the Treaty, especially as regards equipment.

www.zanggercommittee.org

ZNG

Zero Nominal Growth. A more extreme version of the ZRG policy.

ZRG

Zero Real Growth. A cap on the inflation-adjusted level of the budget of specialized agencies and programmes insisted upon by major donor countries.
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UN DOCUMENT SYMBOLS

United Nations documentation can be identified by a combination of symbols indicating the principal organ/subsidiary body issuing the document or to which the document was presented. Components of the symbols also refer to the session, the nature of the document and modifications to the text.

This list is not exhaustive.

A/
General Assembly

S/
Security Council

E/
Economic and Social Council

ST/
Secretariat

CAT/C/-
Committee against Torture

CRC/C/-
Committee on the Rights of the Child
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**CCPR/C/-**
Human Rights Committee

**CERD/C/-**
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**CEDAW/C/-**
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**DP/-**
United Nations Development Programme

**TD/-**
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**UNEP/-**
United Nations Environment Programme

**WFC/-**
World Food Council

**-/S-../..**
Special Session

**-/ES-../..**
Emergency Special Session
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-/CR/..
Credentials Committee

-/BUR/..
General Committee

-/AC. .../-
Ad hoc committee

-/C. .../-
Standing/permanent/main committee

-/CN. .../-
Commission

-/CONF. .../-
Conference

-/GC. .../-
Governing council

-/PC/. .../-
Preparatory committee

-/SC. .../-
Subcommittee

-/Sub. .../-
Subcommission
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-\textit{/WG. .../-}
Working group

-\textit{/CRP. ...}
Conference room paper

-\textit{/INF/-}
Information series

-\textit{/L. ...}
Limited distribution

-\textit{/NGO/-}
Statements by non-governmental organizations

-\textit{/PET/-}
Petitions

-\textit{/PRST/-}
Statements by the President of the Security Council

-\textit{/PV. ...}
Verbatim records of meetings

-\textit{/R. ...}
Restricted distribution

-\textit{/RES/-}
Resolution
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- /SR. ...
  Summary records of meetings

- /Wp. ...
  Working papers

- /Add. ...
  Addendum

- /Amend. ...
  Alteration, by decision of a competent authority, of a portion of an adopted formal text

- /Corr. ...
  Corrigendum (which may not apply to all language versions)

- /Excerpt
  Indicates the revise of an excerpt from a document when only petition is required

- /Rev. ...
  Revision (replacing texts previously issued)

- /Summary
  Summarized version

- /-*
  Reissuance of a document for technical reasons
UNITAR Glossary of Terms

References


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