



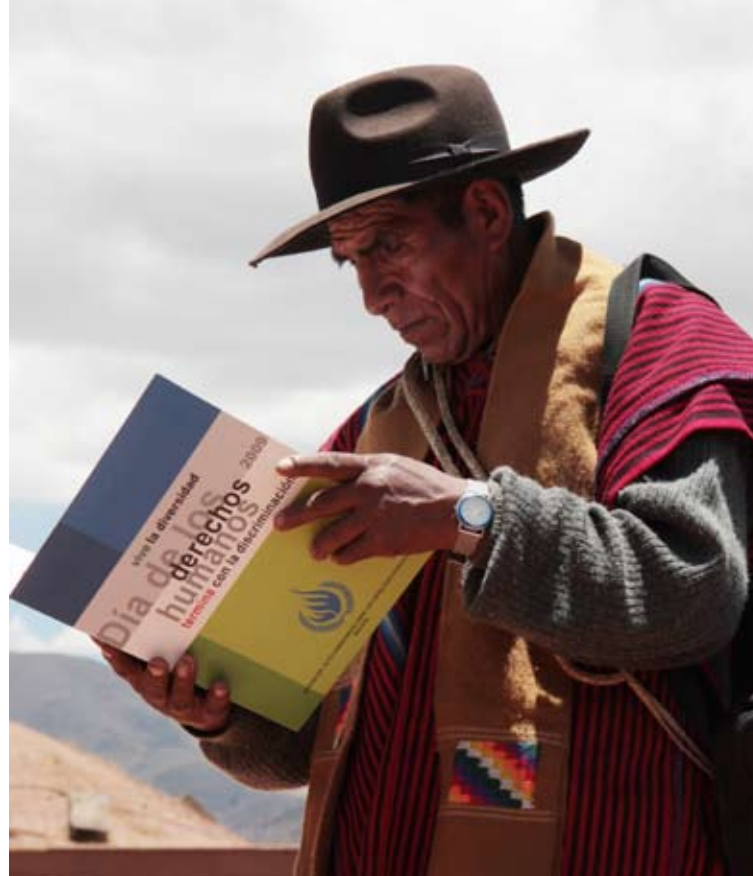
## Civil Society Section

The Civil Society Section is dedicated to empowering civil society actors through increasing their awareness of international human rights standards, information and strategies, as well as developing their capacities to engage effectively with the UN human rights system.

### Activities of the Section include:

- Sharing information through email broadcasts of news and activities of OHCHR and UN human rights mechanisms and mandates
- Development of materials on how civil society actors can engage with the UN human rights programme
- Capacity building
- Tracing trends relating to civil society actors throughout the world
- Outreach activities in collaboration with OHCHR field presences
- Advocacy for civil society participation with the UN human rights programme

Working with civil society to promote and protect human rights is a strategic priority for OHCHR.



Download *Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme: A Handbook for Civil Society and join our contact list:*

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx>

For further information contact:

### Civil Society Section

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Palais des Nations

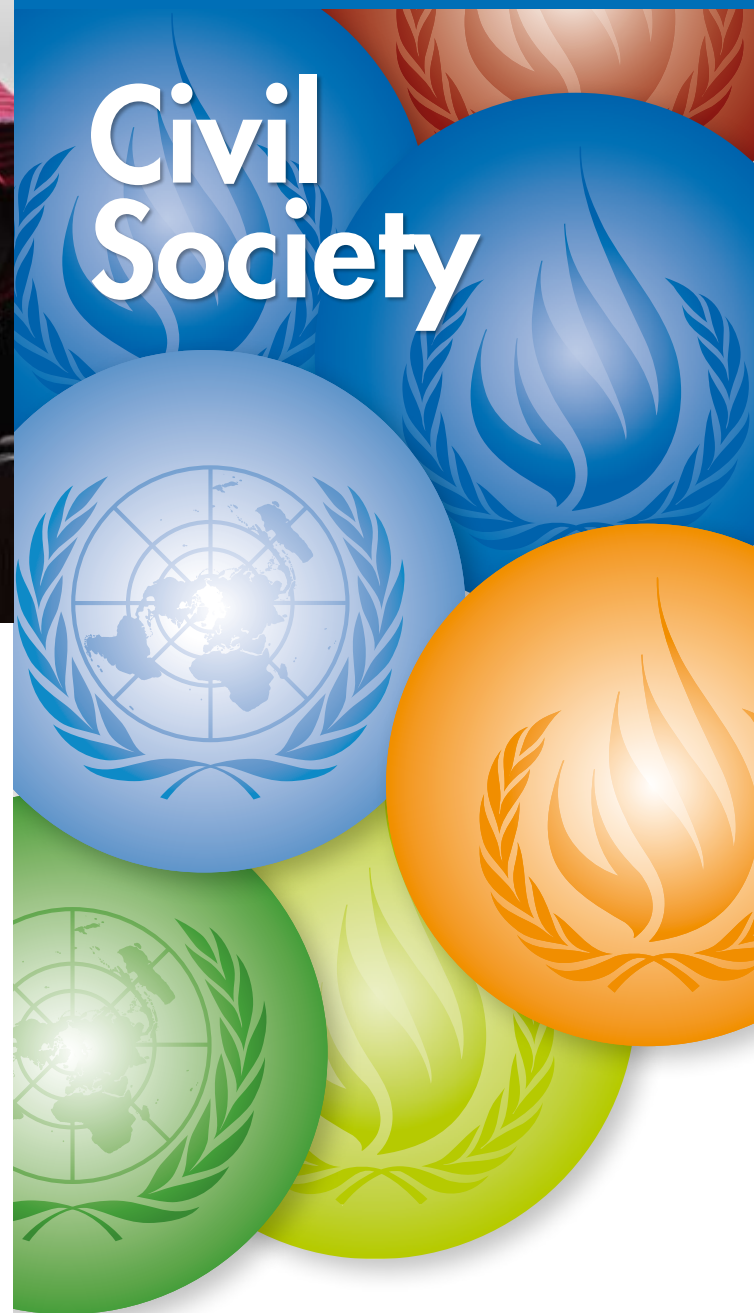
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# Civil Society





## Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is responsible for leading the United Nations human rights programme, and for promoting and protecting all human rights established under the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

OHCHR aspires for a society respectful of all human rights for all people.

## Civil Society

*“A dynamic and autonomous civil society, able to operate freely, knowledgeable and skilled with regard to human rights bolsters OHCHR’s shared objectives, helps to address mutual concerns, and supports the mission of OHCHR.”*

*High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay*

OHCHR recognises that durable and sustainable social change comes from civic organization motivated by principles of non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and respect for human dignity.

Every day in every part of the world, civil society actors—non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, faith-based groups, unions, grassroots and social movements, to name but a few—contribute to the advan-



cement of human rights. They seek to shape public policies through advocacy and education of government officials, politicians, businesses, international organizations, the general public, as well as other civil society actors.

Civil society actors also work to heal communities at conflict; give voice to the powerless; carry out research and monitoring; and assist vulnerable populations to claim their rights. They work to advance all human rights, including the right to development.

**“We the peoples...”**

**(United Nations Charter, preamble)**

## United Nations Human Rights System

The United Nations human rights system consists of a set of internationally agreed civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The different mechanisms established to promote and protect them include: Human Rights Treaty Bodies, the Human Rights Council and its Special Procedures and, the Universal Periodic Review and other mechanisms.

These mechanisms provide civil society actors with a unique democratic space in which to participate: contribute expertise; raise awareness about issues; participate in monitoring and implementation of standards, as well as in development of new standards.

UN human rights mandates and mechanisms are an invaluable resource to inform civil society strategies for promoting and protecting all human rights for all.