

December 27, 2022

To: ALA Executive Board

Action: Approval of the ALA IRC United Nations Subcommittee

ALA IRC United Nations Subcommittee

Charge: ALA's IRC United Nations Subcommittee will collaborate with ALA divisions, round tables, committees and membership, and US library associations in the implementation of the multi-year strategic plan developed by the ALA UN 2030 SDG Task Force to increase participation by libraries in efforts to achieve the Goals. (This should cover all present and future advocacy/collaboration related to the UN. Hence.)

First order of business will be to help ALA staff answering questions on the application to secure Consultative Status to the Consultative Status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which is the highest status granted by the United Nations to non-governmental organizations (NGO's), thereby allowing ALA to participate in the work of the United Nations.

Members- the average member number of IRC Subcommittee is around 8. Members should commit to work hands-on helping to craft documents or engaging in discussions.

Here's the list of proposed members which have not been contacted:

1. Loida Garcia-Febo, International Library Consultant, Chair of the ALA UN 2030 SDGs Task Force, IFLA advocate at the UN since 2014, ALA President 2018-2019
2. John Szabo, CEO Los Angeles Public Library and former member of the ALA UN 2030 SDGs Task Force (former president of the OCLC Council; he has connections at public libraries across the USA and internationally)
3. Robin Kear, President of the Faculty Senate at the University of Pittsburgh (only librarian president of such body at a University; she has connections at academic libraries across the USA and internationally), and former member of the ALA UN 2030 SDGs Task Force
4. Steven Yates, Professor at the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies (Past President of the AASL with connections at school libraries across the USA; former practicing school librarian)
5. A representative from the ALA Sustain Round Table
6. Zena George- member of BCALA, Assistant Director, NYPL Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library (NYPL system includes top research and academic type libraries, it is located right in NYC, and as an admin, Zena can be valuable to the committee)
7. Bohyun Kim- member of APALA, CALA, Associate University Librarian for Library Information Technology at the University of Michigan (expert from the IT/tech library sector is valuable).

8. Sara Benson, Copyright Librarian at the University of Illinois Library (expert in copyright and legal matters; chair of IFLA Copyright and Legal Matters Advisory Committee, has represented IFLA at WIPO and other global bodies).

*Membership in the ALA ethnic caucus is highlighted to note ethnic background of some potential members which will enrich this subcommittee.

Supporting information:

ALA will greatly benefit from securing UN ECOSOC Consultative Status. This status gives organizations a higher level of recognition. ECOSOC: United Nations Economic and Social Council <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/home>

As per IFLA staff, IFLA has had UN ECOSOC Consultative Status since the early 1970s.

One of the things that the ALA IRC UN Subcommittee can do is to help with answering the 24 questions in the ECOSOC Consultative submission form. There are some questions which ALA staff need to work with such as providing copies of the organization's financial statement- and with the actual submission of the form. Deadline to submit the application: January and May of each year.

Benefits for ALA:

- Potential donors/partners will note this new status. ALA can build on that for fundraising, grants, etc.
- ALA can connect at another level with officers from the US Administration- in this case to the Ambassador to the UN who currently is Linda Thomas-Greenfield.
- ALA members, libraries, can also benefit from this status as it would show to mayors and elected officers that ALA supports connecting with officers from other countries and indeed potentially connecting with Ambassadors and Presidents (Example, LAPL collaborates with a number of organizations/agencies from other countries to serve their increasing global populations, they could benefit from ALA building on the consultative status, etc.)
- ALA can obtain up to 15 free passes to bring library advocates to the UN to attend different events/forums about anything ECOSOC is part of. An advantage of having passes is that ALA doesn't have to depend on another organization to submit and potentially host a program at the UN during a UN forum, and ALA advocates do not have to depend on any other organization to attend events of interest to ALA. Examples of events: the UN High Level Political Forum, and forums on many topics such as open access, saving oceans, children, hunger, poverty, education, digital transformation, etc. etc. Almost everything presented at the UN in NYC. IFLA's ECOSOC Consultative status enables them to place programs at events in different regions of the world. Of course, ALA is in the USA so, for ALA access to programs is best in the US, NYC.

Basic Facts about ECOSOC Status from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/civil-society/ecosoc-status.html>

- Consultative status provides NGOs with access to not only ECOSOC, but also to its many subsidiary bodies, to the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, ad-hoc processes on small arms, as well as special events organized by the President of the General Assembly. See News and Events for samples.
- Currently, 4,045 NGOs enjoy consultative status with ECOSOC.
- ECOSOC accreditation is separate and distinct from NGOs who are associated the UN Department of Public Information (DPI). These organizations generally have far fewer privileges to participate in intergovernmental meetings of the United Nations. See list of DPI-associated NGOs [here](#). See website [here](#).
- You can sort and review all NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status in an online database. [Access the database here](#).
- There are three types of consultative status: General, Special and Roster.
- General and special status NGOs are required to submit a ‘quadrennial report’ every four years. [Learn more](#).
- **The Committee on NGOs reviews new applications for consultative status twice a year, in January (‘regular session’) and in May (‘resumed session’).** The Committee does not decide but recommends. These recommendations, contained in one report for the January session and one report for the May session, are reviewed by ECOSOC in April and July respectively. [See past reports here](#).
- **In most cases, ECOSOC decides to approve the recommendations.** In very rare cases, it does not. The deadline for applications is 1 June of the year before the Committee reviews the application.

This page has all the info on how to apply for the ECOSOC Consultative Status
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/civil-society/ecosoc-status.html>