

Ability to Treat Self and Others Fairly – To treat oneself and others equally, justly, and respectfully.

Acculturation – To adapt to a different culture on fairly equal terms. During this process, individuals or groups adopt certain aspects of another culture in respectful, unforced ways. This term is different from *assimilation*, which is forced and one-sided.

Active Listening – The active process of hearing and understanding what someone is saying. To be a good listener, one must learn to empathize with the speaker(s) by trying to put oneself into another person's place in order to understand his or her perspective(s) and stories.

Activist – A person who intentionally acts to bring about civic, cultural, economic, political, or [social](#) change. This person's actions support or oppose one side of a [controversial](#) argument. Activism may refer to a variety of actions, including [protest](#), writing letters to newspapers or politicians, participating in rallies and [street marches](#), and many other tactics to bring about change that promotes and protects human rights.

Affirmative Action – Action taken by a government or private institution to make up for past discrimination in education, work, or promotion on the basis of age, birth, color, creed, disability, ethnic origin, familial status, gender, language, marital status, political or other opinion, public assistance, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Apathy (Opposite: Empathy) – Lack of interest or concern; indifference.

Assimilation – To be structurally and/or culturally absorbed by a dominant group. During this process, an individual or a group is largely forced to shed its own culture and take on the culture of the dominant group. *Assimilation* may not be done on equal terms and thus is one-sided.

Brotherhood/Sisterhood – An association or bond of solidarity between persons. Brothers and sisters are an integral part of a family, although people need not be blood-related siblings to be a part of a *brotherhood* and a *sisterhood*. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood [and sisterhood]" (Article 1, UDHR)..

Child Exploitation and Slavery – According to the [Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor](#), *the worst forms of child labor* include, "...all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict."

Citing Evidence in Support of Ideas – To express, in oral or written form, information that confirms a particular view.

Civic Engagement – To participate in public life, encourage other people to participate in public life, and join in common work that promotes the well-being of everyone.

Civil and Political Rights – The rights to liberty and equality. Such rights include freedom to worship, to express oneself, to vote, to take part in political life, and to have access to information.

Classism – Attitude, action, and institutional practices that subordinate one class to a dominant class.

Codification (Codify) – The process of transforming principles or practices into written legal form.

Colonialism/Imperialism – The extension of a nation's *sovereignty* over territory and people outside its own boundaries in order to facilitate domination over natural resources, labor, and markets. The term also refers to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system, especially the belief that the [mores](#) of the colonizer are superior to those of the colonized.

Community – A group of people who identify with each other, have common interests, or are viewed as forming a distinct segment of society. The word community can also mean a society as a whole. A Human Rights Community is a community based on human rights, where respect for the fundamental dignity of each individual is recognized as essential to society.

Community Service – Service that is designed to assist in addressing community problems such as housing, poverty, government, recreation, employment, youth opportunities, transportation, health, and land use.

Conflict Resolution – Reconciling opposing perspectives, stories, or experiences and deciding on a response that promotes and protects the human rights of all parties concerned.

Convention – A legally binding agreement between nations designed to protect human rights (used interchangeably with [treaty](#) and [covenant](#)). *Conventions* are considered to have more legal force than [declarations](#) because governments are legally bound to enforce the agreements that they have ratified. When the [UN General Assembly](#) adopts a *convention*, it creates international standards for action and behavior. Once a *convention* is adopted by the *UN General Assembly*, [Member States](#) can then ratify it, thereby promising to uphold it. Governments that violate the standards set forth in a *convention* can then be censured by the UN and by governments.

Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW or Women's Convention; adopted 1979, entered into force 1981) – The most comprehensive legally binding international *convention* prohibiting discrimination against women and obligating governments to take affirmative steps to advance the equality of women.

Convention on the Rights of the Child – ([Children's Convention; adopted 1989, entered into force 1990](#)) – *Convention* setting forth a full spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, social, and political rights for children.

Covenant – A legally binding agreement between nations (used synonymously with [convention](#) and [treaty](#)). The major international human rights *covenants*, both adopted in 1966 (and entered into force in 1976), are the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Creed – A set of fundamental beliefs or guiding principles. A creed can be either religious or secular.

Critical Thinking – Analyzing and contemplating past and present experiences, as well as future possibilities, by taking into account multiple perspectives on a story or narrative..

Critically Analyzing History – Analyzing a historical event or era from different cultural perspectives, including birth, gender, language, national or social origin, political or other opinion, property, or other status..

Cultural Rights – The right to preserve and develop one's cultural identity, as well as the right to protect endangered cultures.

Customary International Law – Law that becomes binding on nations through general acceptance as a matter of legal obligation. When enough states have begun to behave as though some principle is law, it becomes law "by use"; this is one of the main sources of international law.

Cynicism (Opposite: Optimism) – An attitude of scornful or jaded negativity, especially a general distrust of the integrity or professed motives of others.

Declaration – A document comprising standards that nations agree upon, but which are not legally binding like treaty provisions. UN conferences, such as the [1993 UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna](#) and the [1995 World Conference for Women in Beijing](#), usually produce two sets of declarations: one written by government representatives and one written by *Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)*. The [UN General Assembly](#) often issues influential declarations.

Democracy – A system of government in which people’s views are reflected and the right of political participation is guaranteed. Such a form of government involves the principles of promoting and protecting human rights, social equality, and respect for the individual within a community.

Direct Action – Those tactics that can be undertaken by people themselves, without the help of government agencies, lawyers, or other institutions. Examples include picketing, work slowdowns, strikes, occupation of buildings, and marches.

Discrimination (Opposite: Non-Discrimination) – Distinction between individuals not based on legitimate terms; arbitrary bias for or against an individual or a group that fails to take true account of their characteristics or treat an individual or a group in a just and equitable manner. Discrimination can be based on age, birth, color, creed, disability, ethnic origin, familial status, gender, language, marital status, political or other opinion, public assistance, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Distinguishing Between Fact, Opinion, and Reasoned Judgment – *Fact* can be defined as knowledge or information based on real occurrences or empirical evidence, while *opinions* are beliefs or conclusions held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof. Judgment means discernment, assessment and/or comparison of ideas to arrive at a conclusion. *Reasoned judgment* is any belief or conclusion reached on the basis of careful thought and reflection, distinguished from mere or unreasoned opinion on the one hand, and from simple fact on the other.

Distinguishing Between Wants, Needs, and Rights – A *want* is a desire, whereas a *need* is a necessity and *rights* constitute entitlements. *Human rights* are mutual, equal, universal, non-discriminatory, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent.

Diversity – The representation of multiple groups within a larger group, community, or area, such as a school or a workplace.

Economic Globalization – The continuing integration of markets through global trade by way of trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), trade organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and regional economic blocs, such as the European Union (EU). *Economic Globalization* is the subject of heated debate: Supporters argue that globalization generates wealth, increases trade, and spurs development, while critics argue that globalization leads to environmental degradation, exploitation of the poor by powerful states and companies, and does not support sustainable development.

Economic Justice – Fairness and equity in economic affairs, by establishing laws, governments, and institutions that treat people equally and avoid favoring particular individuals or groups while providing opportunities to those living in poverty.

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights – Rights that concern the production, development, and management of material for the necessities of life. These rights also include the right to preserve and develop one’s cultural identity, as well as rights that give people social and economic security, sometimes referred to as security-oriented rights. Examples of such rights include the rights to adequate education, food, shelter, and health care.

Empathy – The ability to listen deeply to another person’s story or experience and connect to the person’s feelings and story.

Environmental, Cultural, and Developmental Rights – These rights recognize that people have the right to live in a safe and healthy environment and that groups of people have the right to cultural, political, and economic development.

Environmental Degradation – The diminishment of an [ecosystem](#) or a [biosphere](#) due to [human](#) activity. *Environmental degradation* occurs when natural resources (such as trees, habitat, earth, water, air) are consumed faster than they can be replenished. [Sustainability](#) requires that human activity, at a minimum, only uses nature's resources to the point where they can be replenished naturally.

Equality – This human rights principle mandates the same treatment of persons. The notion of fairness and respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings, as specified in Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Ethnocentrism – A practice of consciously or unconsciously privileging one's own ethnic group over others that involves judging other groups by the values of one's own group.

Examining Assumptions – Process of deconstructing and analyzing the bases of ideas generally taken for granted in a given society or school of thought. An assumption is something taken for granted or accepted as true without proof, and can be a generalization based on limited or nonexistent experience. Identifying and considering the validity of assumptions are critical thinking skills.

Freedom – Political independence, *liberty*.

Fulfilling Civic and Social Responsibilities – Carrying out the duties associated with *Civic Engagement* – that is, participating in public life, encouraging other people to participate in public life, and joining in common work that promotes the well-being of everyone.

Genocide – A crime defined in international law as acts intended to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group of human beings.

Government – The act or process of governing, especially the decision-making and implementation of public policy in a political unit. The authority, leadership, or agent responsible for promoting and protecting human rights.

Government Responsibility – The obligations that a government must fulfill. Human Rights are an integral part of these obligations. Human rights are not gifts given at the pleasure of governments, nor should governments withhold them or apply them to some people but not to others. Governments must be held accountable for promoting and protecting the human rights of all persons.

Group Rights – The right of groups to protect their interests and identities.

Human Dignity – This principle of human rights signifies that each individual, regardless of age, birth, color, creed, disability, ethnic origin, familial status, gender, language, marital status, political or other opinion, public assistance, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, deserves to be honored, esteemed, and respected.

Human Rights – The rights people have simply because they are human beings, regardless of their ability, citizenship, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, or sexuality; human rights become enforceable when they are [codified](#) as [conventions](#), [covenants](#), or [treaties](#), as they become recognized as [customary international law](#), or as they are accepted in national or local law.

Human Rights Commissions – Departments or committees of state and local governments in the United States established to address human rights issues by promoting human rights and investigating human rights violations.

Hurting People (feelings, physically) – An action causing emotional, physical, psychological or spiritual pain, either intentionally or unintentionally, to another person or group.

Ignorance – The condition of being uneducated, unaware, or uninformed.

Illiteracy (Opposite: Literacy) – The inability to read or write. Illiteracy can also refer to the ignorance of a set of terms or ideas that describe a concept. For example, human rights illiteracy is a lack of knowledge regarding human rights principles and norms.

Immigration – The act of moving to a country where one is not a native. Immigrants are people who come to a country where they intend to settle permanently and many of them obtain citizenship. A legal immigrant is a person who comes to settle in a country with the legal permission of its government. An undocumented immigrant is a person residing in a country without the legal permission of its government.

Inalienable – Word that describes something that cannot be taken or given away. Human rights that individuals have cannot be taken away, surrendered, or transferred.

Indigenous Peoples – People who are the original or natural inhabitants of a land. Native Americans/American Indians, for example, are the *Indigenous Peoples* of the United States.

Individual Rights – A term referring to what one is allowed to do and what can be done to an individual; the rights possessed by individuals.

Individuality vs. Collectivity – *Individuality* refers to the quality or state of being allowed to form one's own identity and being allowed to sustain that identity no matter what the identities of others are. *Collectivity* is a unification that is formed by more than one individual acting together.

Indivisible – Word that describes something that cannot be divided or reduced. Human rights should be addressed as an indivisible body, including civil, political, social, economic, cultural, and collective rights.

Injustice (Opposite: Justice) – Denying fair, [moral](#), and [impartial](#) treatment of the human rights of all persons.

Integrating Human Rights into Personal Awareness and Behaviors – To perceive one's own existence in terms of human rights, including one's own traits, feelings, and behaviors. Self-awareness is a personal understanding of the very core of one's own identity.

Interdependence – Human rights concerns appear in all spheres of life, such as in home, school, workplace, court, and markets. Human rights violations are interconnected; the loss of one right detracts from other rights. Similarly, promotion of human rights in one area supports other human rights.

Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) – Organizations sponsored by multiple governments that seek to coordinate their efforts. Some are regional (e.g., the Council of Europe, the African Union), some are strategic alliances (e.g., the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO), and some are global or dedicated to a specific purpose (e.g., the United Nations).

International Bill of Human Rights – The combination of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) and its Optional Protocol, and the [International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights \(ICESCR\)](#).

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – A treaty that was adopted in 1966, and entered into force in 1976. The *ICCPR* establishes that all people have a broad range of civil and political rights. One of the components of the [International Bill of Human Rights](#).

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) – A treaty that was adopted 1966, and entered into force 1976. The *ICESCR* declares that all people have a broad range of economic, social, and cultural rights. One of the components of the [International Bill of Human Rights](#).

International Labor Organization (ILO) – Organization established in 1919 as part of the Versailles Peace Treaty to improve working conditions and promote social justice; the *ILO* became a specialized agency of the UN in 1946.

International Law – A set of rules generally regarded and accepted as binding in relations between states and nations. International human rights law is a part of international law designed to protect people against torture, inhuman

treatment, arbitrary killings, discrimination, failure to take steps to provide adequate food, shelter, healthcare, and other human rights abuses.

*The foundation documents of international human rights law are the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and its two Optional Protocols), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights..

Justice – Fairness, equity, and morality in action or attitude in order to promote and protect human rights and responsibilities. In most societies, people work for justice by organizing through different categories of rights, such as civil, political, economic, social, and cultural.

Kindness – Caring for or showing *empathy* for others.

Knowing Human Rights – To know the past, present, and evolving nature of human rights, as found in the *International Bill of Human Rights* and other human rights standards and norms.

Liberty – The freedom to act.

Listening to and Understanding Diverse Perspectives – Exercising the ability to listen, understand, and apply diverse perspectives and stories to one's daily experiences.

Literacy (Opposite: Illiteracy) – The ability to read and write in one or more languages. Literacy can also refer to the ability to understand a set of ideas and terms related to a central concept. For example, human rights literacy is the ability to understand and speak in terms of human rights principles and norms.

Member States – Countries that are members of intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations.

Moral Rights and Responsibilities – Rights and obligations based on the general principles of fairness and justice; they are often but not always based on religious beliefs. People sometimes feel they have moral rights even when they do not have legal or human rights in a given situation.

Nationalism – A sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on the promotion of its economic and political interests and culture over those of other nations.

Nonbinding – Term referring to a document, such as a [declaration](#), that carries no formal legal obligations. It may, however, carry moral obligations or eventually attain the force of law as [customary international law](#).

Non-Discrimination (Opposite: Discrimination) – Non-discrimination is vital to the concept of equality. It ensures that no one is denied the protection of their human rights based on external factors. Such factors include age, birth, color, creed, disability, ethnic origin, familial status, gender, language, marital status, political or other opinion, public assistance, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. These categories, however, are only examples; they do not mean that discrimination is allowed on other grounds.

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) – Organizations formed by people outside of government. *NGOs* monitor the proceedings of human rights bodies, such as the United Nations, and are the "watchdogs" of the human rights that fall within their mandate. Some are large and international (e.g., the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and the Girl Scouts), while others may be small and local (e.g., an organization to advocate for people with disabilities in a particular city; a coalition to promote women's rights in one refugee camp). Many NGOs have official consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Nonviolence (or non-violence) – A set of assumptions about morality, power, and conflict that leads its proponents to reject the use of violence in efforts to attain social or political goals. While often used as a synonym for pacifism, since the mid-20th century the term nonviolence has come to embody a diversity of techniques for waging social conflict

without the use of violence, as well as the underlying political and philosophical rationale for the use of these techniques.

Oppression – The systematic exploitation of one societal group by another for its own benefit. The phenomenon involves institutional control, ideological domination, and the imposition of the dominant group’s culture on the oppressed.

Passivity – The condition of being inactive or submissive.

Persecution – Violation of the rights of an individual or group by another individual or group. The most common forms are ethnic, racial, and [religious persecution](#). These types of persecution overlap to some degree, as religion is commonly an aspect of culture and ethnic identities are often intertwined with racial identities. The most common persecution scenario is a majority group mistreating a minority group.

Political Repression – The denial of the right of people to participate in the political life of their communities and society. For example, denial of the right to vote or run for office.

Poverty – Condition of being unable to achieve an adequate standard of living. Today, standards of living vary greatly among and within nations. Nonetheless, the effects of poverty remain constant: hunger, homelessness, lack of education, and lack of resources to fulfill basic human needs. For example, one of the main causes of hunger is poverty. Most people who are starving do not have the means to obtain the food that they need..

Prejudice – An attitude, opinion, or feeling formed without adequate prior knowledge, thought, or reason. *Prejudice* can be prejudgment for or against any individual, group, or object. Any individual or group can hold *prejudice(s)* towards another individual, group, or object.

Problem-Solving – Identifying multiple responses to an issue or dilemma and choosing a response which promotes and protects the human rights of all parties.

Protocol – A *treaty* which modifies another *treaty* (e.g., adding additional procedures or substantive provisions).

Racism – An ideology of racial superiority and hierarchy based on discrimination.

Ratification – Process by which a government confirms a state’s action in becoming legally bound by a treaty; formal procedure by which a state becomes bound to a *treaty* after acceptance.

Refugee Displacement – *Displaced persons* have been forced by dangerous circumstances to leave home for a place of safety within their home country. Such circumstances include natural disasters such as droughts or storms, persecution, social unrest, wars, or revolutions. If a person flees to a place within the home country, he or she is called internally displaced. If that person flees to another country, he or she is called a refugee.

Research – Using multiple sources to thoroughly study a human rights topic. Such sources can be books, newspapers, magazine or journal articles, or primary human rights documents (e.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Reservation –The exceptions that [State Parties](#) make to a treaty (e.g., provisions that they do not agree to follow). Reservations, however, may not undermine the fundamental objective and purpose of the *treaty*.

Respect – To honor, appreciate, and treat others with dignity.

Respect for self – Treating oneself with care, love, and appreciation, while valuing one’s unique and shared characteristics.

Respect for parents and teachers – Treating parents and teachers with care, respect, and appreciation.

Respect for others – Treating others with care, respect, and appreciation.

Responsibility – Obligation, duty, and/or accountability.

Government responsibility – Human rights are not gifts given at the pleasure of governments, nor should governments withhold them or apply them to some people but not to others. Governments must be held accountable for promoting and protecting the human rights of all persons.

Individual responsibility – Duties possessed by individuals. For example, every individual has a responsibility to teach human rights, to respect human rights, and to challenge institutions and individuals that abuse them.

Other responsible entities – Every organ of society, including corporations, educational institutions, foundations, and non-governmental organizations also share responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Rule of Law – A government must function or operate in support of written laws, which should be adopted through an established procedure. This principle is intended to be a safeguard against unfair judgments or procedures in individual cases. Hence, those who make and enforce the law must respect and uphold the law.

Security – The level of protection or safety by or for an individual, group, or system against threats to human rights, such as arbitrary detention, food deprivation, or unwarranted physical harm.

Self – The total, essential, or particular being of a person; the individual.

Self-Determination – Political independence on the part of a group without control by people outside of that area.

Self-Expression – Sharing one's thoughts, beliefs, feelings, ideas or personality, through verbal or non-verbal means, including dance, essays, music, painting, photography, poetry, spoken word, sculpture, etc.

Sexism – Attitudes, conditions, or behaviors that promote stereotyping and *oppression* based on sex and gender; *discrimination* based on sex or gender.

Sharing Learning – Communicating with other members of one's family, class, school, or larger community through multi-media or diverse methods of expression what one has learned.

Signing/Sign – The first step in [ratification](#) of a [treaty](#); to sign a treaty and thus to promise to adhere to the core principles in the document and to honor its spirit.

Sisterhood/Brotherhood – An association or bond of solidarity between persons. Brothers and sisters are an integral part of a family, although people need not be blood-related siblings to be a part of a *brotherhood* and a *sisterhood*. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood [and sisterhood]" (Article 1, UDHR).

Social Change – Refers to progress resulting from acts of [advocacy](#) for the [cause](#) of enacting positive change in [society](#). Social change movements are generally organized in response to particular oppressions based on race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and age.

Social Justice – The practice of promoting and protecting human rights and responsibilities, with a particular emphasis on the economic and social rights of society's most vulnerable groups.

Social Responsibility – The obligation to ensure that one's actions produce an overall positive impact on society and on the promotion and protection of human rights.

Solidarity – A union of interests, purposes, or sympathies among members of a group. For example, *Solidarity* is often associated with labor movements.

Sovereignty – The possession or exercise of full control by a government over a territorial or geographical area or limit.

State – (often synonymous with "country". Geo-political unit encompassing a group of people permanently occupying a fixed territory having common laws and a government capable of conducting international affairs.

State Parties – Those countries that have [ratified](#) or otherwise accepted a *treaty* or a [convention](#) and are thereby bound to conform to its provisions.

Systemic Change – Process of enacting large-scale change while moving beyond thinking about individual organizations, single problems, and single solutions. Systemic change is a cyclical process in which the impact of change on all parts of the whole and their relationships to one another are taken into consideration. For example, the term entails thinking about many types of systems, such as educational systems, information systems, policy systems, social service systems, and technology systems.

Torture – Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of an individual (e.g., a public official) or group on a person for such reasons as obtaining from him or her or a third person information or confession, punishing them for an act they have committed or are suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or her or other persons.

Treaty – A formal agreement between nations, which defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations (a *treaty* which may be ratified by more than two States Parties is a multilateral treaty, sometimes known as a [convention](#)). When *conventions* are adopted by the [UN General Assembly](#), they create legally binding international obligations for the [Member States](#) that have ratified the *treaty*.

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions – *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions*, unlike traditional courts, focus primarily on the victims of past oppression and rely heavily on their accounts. They provide a forum for survivors to tell their stories and suffering through private or public hearings. Anybody who feels they have been a victim of violence can come forward and be heard. Perpetrators of violence can also give testimony and, in some circumstances, request [amnesty](#) from prosecution. *Truth and Reconciliation Commissions* are crucial transition components to full and free democracy and vary in form from country to country.

Understanding other Points of View – Recognizing different perspectives of one experience or event.

Unfairness (Opposite: Fairness) – Not just, evenhanded, or ethical.

United Nations Charter – Initial treaty of the UN setting forth its goals, functions, and responsibilities; adopted in San Francisco in 1945.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – United Nations organization that works to promote the human rights of children throughout the world. UNICEF has a variety of programs that address the organization's priority areas of child protection, early childhood, girl's education, HIV/AIDS, and immunization.

United Nations Commission on Human Rights – Body of the United Nations established to draft human rights standards and otherwise address human rights issues.

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – A UN council of 54 members primarily concerned with population, economic development, human rights, and criminal justice. This high-ranking body receives and issues human rights reports.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – Body of the United Nations established to

advance science and learning in the five areas of Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information. The mission of the Social and Human Sciences section of UNESCO is to spur advances and innovation that promote the universal principles of justice, freedom, and human dignity.

United Nations General Assembly – One of the principal organs of the UN, consisting of representatives of all member states. The *General Assembly* issues [declarations](#), adopts [conventions](#) on human rights issues, debates relevant issues, and censures states that violate human rights. The actions of the *General Assembly* are governed by the [United Nations Charter](#).

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – United Nations agency charged with facilitating international action to address the problems faced by refugees, as well as to promote and protect their human rights. Such rights include the right to seek asylum and the right to return home voluntarily.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) – Body of the United Nations established to press the international community and UN *Member States* to honor and uphold human rights treaties, principles, and norms. The OHCHR also speaks on behalf of the victims of human rights violations.

United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights - Subsidiary body of the UN Commission on Human Rights formerly known as the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The Sub-Commission's function is to conduct human rights *research* and to make recommendations to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

Unity – Individuals or groups coming together for a single purpose.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – Primary UN document establishing human rights standards and norms, which was adopted by the UN *General Assembly* on December 10, 1948. The UDHR is an authoritative definition of the human rights obligations of UN member states. Through time it has become so respected by [states](#) that many of its provisions can now be said to be [customary international law](#).

Universality – Certain moral and ethical values are considered to be common or shared in all regions of the world; governments and communities should recognize and uphold them. The universality of human rights does not mean that the rights cannot change or that they are experienced in the same manner by all people.

World Development – Development whose goal is to alleviate poverty among residents of [developing countries](#). International development is a multidisciplinary field that includes [poverty reduction](#), [governance](#), [healthcare](#), [education](#), crisis prevention and recovery, and economic restructuring. Development is intended as a long-term solution to poverty and desperation.

World Political Economy – Area of study which encompasses a variety of different but related approaches to studying economic behavior of countries, individuals, and companies, which range from combining economics with other fields to challenging assumptions of traditional economics.