**NGOs, Funding by World Bank and IMF**

**NGOs:** Nongovernmental organizations operate under different names and different guises in both developed and developing countries (see box on their nomenclature.) Their work is parallel and often quite complementary to that of official development agencies. They are traditionally known for their humanitarian, relief activities: they move quickly to the front lines when an emergency arises, be it famine, forced migration, or a natural or man-made disaster. Less appreciated, but no less important, is NGO work in socioeconomic development, from village-level production projects to involvement in country development policies as the “voice of the poor and of the under-represented.” In addition, as a “coalition of consciences,” “global think tanks,” “do-gooders” or the “independent sector,” as they are referred to in a variety of contexts, NGOs seek to sensitize the public in industrial countries to North-South interdependence, and urge more generous development assistance.

In spite of the heterogeneity of NGOs, two themes run throughout their development work: (1) self-reliance: people can do much to help themselves (or help others) without government intervention or support from aid agencies; (2) people’s participation: people are the protagonists of development. People have to be associated with development planning and implementation, and must be given freedom to operate in areas that the government cannot effectively reach. Even the best development blueprint will not improve the lot of the poor, unless the intended beneficiaries understand it and support it.

The current worldwide search for ways to make optimal use of very scarce resources and stimulate broad-based development makes it very timely for economic development agencies to take stock of NGO development activities and thinking, and strengthen collaboration among public and private institutions engaged in promoting growth with social equity. Private philanthropy and self-help associations have a long history and, in fact, predate development agencies. The latter have long endeavored to set up collaborative relations with NGOs, particularly since the 1960s. These relations have been inspired by an ideological blueprint, such as helping a newly independent country to develop a pluralistic society (a view widespread in the United States) or advance social democracy (a motivation common in Europe, particularly among Scandinavian countries). Pragmatic considerations have prevailed with aid agencies that look at NGOs in a functional way, that is, as more efficient conduits for development inputs. Some relationships have been structured through specialized institutions and procedures; for instance, the European Community and most bilateral aid agencies have substantial programs for NGO projects. The World Bank carries out a policy dialogue and operational cooperation with NGOs (see discussion below.)

The wide variety of NGOs and of country situations has so far discouraged comprehensive research on NGOs. A small body of analytical material is becoming available from the OECD Development Assistance Committee, development agencies, and academia on NGO successes and failures in development. NGOs themselves are more forthcoming in presenting their views on development in a systematic manner (see, for instance, Private Voluntary Organizations as Agents of Development, Robert F. Gorman, editor, Westview Press, 1984.)

### A Guide to NGO Terminology

NGOs are also referred to as private voluntary organizations. In much of the Third World, however, the terms NGOs and PVOs denote foreign entities; local denominations, such as national self-help or self-reliance organizations, are preferred for indigenous organizations. NGO terminology is not yet well established since NGO typology is still uncodified. Following is an attempt at identifying major NGO categories, although with some approximation and overlapping. The first two categories are fundamental.

**Philanthropic NGOs** are moved by altruistic considerations, either religious or secular, e.g., church charity groups and private foundations for humanitarian purposes.

**Self-help NGOs** are motivated by economic self-interest or self-help objectives. They would serve professional groups (e.g., women’s associations) or act as a cooperative.

NGOs that belong to either of the two preceding basic categories are further distinguishable as follows:

**Welfare NGOs** aim at providing succor to people, whatever the reason and circumstances of their need for assistance and, generally, without plans for addressing the cause of the distress.

**Development NGOs** aim at promoting ultimate self-reliance of their beneficiaries. If the beneficiaries are members of the NGO, the organization is of the self-help type: otherwise it is philanthropic.

**Donor NGOs** are prevalent among NGOs based in industrial countries and generally fall in the philanthropic category

**Local NGOs** are NGOs from developing countries or indigenous NGOs; they tall primarily in the self-help group.

**Operational NGOs** specialize in the application of development resources. They include program agencies, that is, structured entities with access to continuing financial resources, specialized staff (often deployed in the field), and planned development activities; relief assistance organizations equipped to help after disasters, to run food aid programs, assist refugees, etc.; and service NGOs, that are sources of technical assistance.

**Funding and policy NGOs** gather development resources, be these funds, food, or political support for aid. Among them, some are specialized in fund-raising. Others engage in development education providing information about development, its objectives, strategies, and consequences both for donor and recipient countries. An important subgroup includes the policy research and public debate organizations that concentrate on international economic relations and development issues. These “North-South think tanks” are often private foundations—some linked with major universities.

**Network NGOs** have affiliates, correspondents, sympathizers, and volunteers, as the case may be, in several countries. Among them international NGOs have members or operations in more than one country. NGO consortia (or “umbrella” organizations) can group either donor NGOs or local NGOs. Some consortia act as money or data banks for their members; others provide common representation with agencies or at international conferences; others still function simply as a meeting place or information clearing house.

**Sectoral NGOs** deal with one or few sectors, such as rural water supply.

**Integrated NGOs** strive to respond to a broad range of needs of a population, such as education, health, and urban and rural development. Some of these groups pursue a holistic ideal of development, endeavoring to integrate people’s spiritual and economic needs.

**Incorporated NGOs** have a formal status, often linked to tax exemptions or other concessions in the country of origin or of operation.

**Recognized NGOs** have status with certain organizations. For instance, the UN has a system for the accreditation of NGOs.

Informal NGOs are groups of like-minded people (sometimes called a “movement”) working for a common development purpose without legal bonds. Many Third World NGOs belong to this category. These groups can be permanent or constitute a once-for-all coalition for a single, time-bound objective, e.g., agrarian reform or legislation to protect the environment.

## What Is the International Monetary Fund (IMF)?

The [International Monetary Fund](https://www.investopedia.com/articles/03/030703.asp) (IMF) is an international organization that aims to accomplish a number of different goals. These include reducing global [poverty](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/poverty.asp), encouraging international trade, and promoting financial stability and economic growth.

The organization was created in 1944 and is based in Washington, DC. There are a total of 189 member countries, each of which is represented on the group's board. This representation is based on how important its financial position is in the world, so stronger, more powerful countries have a greater voice in the organization than nations which are much weaker.

The IMF functions in three main areas:

* Overseeing the economies of member countries
* Lending to countries with [balance of payments](https://www.investopedia.com/insights/what-is-the-balance-of-payments/) issues
* Helping member countries modernize their economies

## Monitoring Member Country Economies

The International Monetary Fund's primary job is to promote stability in the global monetary system. So, its first function is to monitor the [economies](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economy.asp) of its 189 member countries. This activity, known as economic surveillance, happens at both the national and global levels. Through economic surveillance, the IMF monitors developments that affect member economies as well as the global economy as a whole.

Member nations must agree to pursue economic policies that coincide with the IMF's objectives. By monitoring the [macroeconomic](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/macroeconomics.asp) and financial policies of its member countries, the IMF sees stability [risks](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/risk.asp) and advises on possible adjustments.

## Lending

The IMF lends money to nurture the economies of member countries with balance of payments problems instead of lending to fund individual projects. This assistance can replenish [international reserves](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/i/international-reserves.asp), stabilize [currencies](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/currency.asp), and strengthen conditions for economic growth. The IMF expects the countries to pay back the loans, and the countries must embark on structural adjustment policies monitored by the IMF.

Lending through the IMF takes two forms. The first is at nonconcessional interest rates, while the other comes with concessional terms. The latter is advanced to countries with low income, and bears very low or no interest rates at all.

## Technical Assistance

The third main function of the IMF is through what it calls capacity development by providing assistance, policy advice, and training through its various programs. The group provides member nations with technical assistance in the following areas:

* Fiscal policy
* Monetary and exchange rate policies
* Banking and financial system supervision and regulation
* Statistics

The organization aims to strengthen human and institutional capacity. This is very important for countries with previous policy failures, weak institutions, or scarce resources. Through capacity development, member nations can help strengthen and improve growth in their economies and create jobs.

**Some of the main functions of International Monetary Fund are as follows:**

#### 1. Exchange Stability:

The first important function of IMF is to maintain exchange stability and thereby to discourage any fluctuations in the rate of exchange. The Fund ensures such stability by making necessary arrangements like—enforcing declaration of par value of currency of all members in terms of gold or US dollar, enforcing devaluation criteria, up to 10 per cent or more by more information or by taking permission from IMF respectively, forbidding members to go in for multiple exchange rates and also to buy or sell gold at prices other than declared par value.

#### 2. Eliminating BOP Disequilibrium:

The Fund is helping the member countries in eliminating or minimizing the short-period equilibrium of balance of payments either by selling or lending foreign currencies to the members. The Fund also helps its members towards removing the long period disequilibrium in their balance of payments. In case of fundamental changes in the economies of its members, the Fund can advise its members to change the par values of its currencies.

#### 3. Determination of Par Value:

IMF enforces the system of determination of par values of the currencies of the members countries. As per the Original Articles of Agreement of the IMF every member country must declare the par value of its currency in terms of gold or US dollars. Under the revised Articles, the members are given autonomy to float or change exchange rates as per demand supply conditions in the exchange market and also at par with internal price levels.

As per this article, IMF is exercising surveillance to ensure proper working and balance in the international monetary system, i.e., by avoiding manipulation in the exchange rates and by adopting intervention policy to counter short-term movements in the exchange value of the currency.

#### 4. Stabilize Economies:

The IMF has an important function to advise the member countries on various economic and monetary matters and thereby to help stabilize their economies.

#### 5. Credit Facilities:

IMF is maintaining various borrowing and credit facilities so as to help the member countries in correcting disequilibrium in their balance of payments. These credit facilities include-basic credit facility, extended fund facility for a period of 3 years, compensatory financing facility for helping the primary producing countries, supplementary financing facility, special oil facility, trust fund, structural adjustment facility etc. The Fund also charges interest from the borrowing countries on their credit.

#### 6. Maintaining Balance Between Demand and Supply of Currencies:

IMF is also entrusted with important function to maintain balance between demand and supply of various currencies. Accordingly the fund can declare a currency as scarce currency which is in great demand and can increase its supply by borrowing it from the country concerned or by purchasing the same currency in exchange of gold.

#### 7. Maintenance of Liquidity:

To maintain liquidity of its resources is another important function of IMF. Accordingly, there is provision for the member countries to borrow from IMF by surrendering their own currencies in exchange. Again for according accumulation of less demand currencies with the Fund, the borrowing countries are directed to repurchase their own currencies by repaying its loans in convertible currencies.

#### 8. Technical Assistance:

The IMF is also performing an useful function to provide technical assistance to the member countries. Such technical assistance in given in two ways, i.e., firstly by granting the members countries the services of its specialists and experts and secondly by sending the outside experts.

**Moreover the Fund has also set up two specialized new departments:**

(a) Central Banking Services Department and

(b) Fiscal Affairs Department for sending specialists to member countries so as to manage its central banks and also on fiscal management.

#### 9. Reducing Tariffs:

The Fund also aims at reducing tariffs and other restrictions imposed on international trade by the member countries so as to cease restrictions of remittance of funds or to avoid discriminating practices.

#### 10. General Watch:

The IMF is also keeping a general watch on the monetary and fiscal policies followed by the member countries to ensure no flouting of the provisions of the charter.

# IMF and NGOs

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an intergovernmental body that plays a key role in the global financial system through its concern with stabilizing international exchange rates and other aspects of global monetary cooperation. The IMF works to secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and facilitate development through temporary financial assistance to nations, thus easing the balance of payments.

With 189 Member States, the IMF is composed of most of the Member States that are also part of the United Nations, with the notable exceptions of Taiwan, North Korea, Cuba, Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein, Tuvalu, and Nauru. When the IMF was created in 1944 together with the World Bank, it originally had 45 Member States, which contributed to a pool that could be borrowed from on a short-term basis by countries with payment imbalances, helping to stabilize the global economic system. The five largest current shareholders are the United States, Japan, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

The supreme governing body of the IMF is the Board of Governors with the Executive Board having many of the executive powers not assumed by the Board of Governors, including the day-to-day work of the body. The International Monetary and Finance Committee and the Development Committee are two key committees.

## Relationship with NGOs

NGOs are not accorded any special mention or recognition in the 1944 Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund, the constituent instrument in the formation of the IMF. There is an Article (X) titled “Relations with Other International Organizations,” but this does not refer to NGOs but just to “general” and “public” international organizations.

Nonetheless, although not called for in its constituent instrument, the IMF does maintain some relationship with NGOs. The IMF considers NGOs as part of civil society (voluntary associations of citizens) as one of several types of civil society organizations (CSOs), the other CSOs including business forums, faith-based associations, labor movements, think tanks, and philanthropic foundations. In the IMF terminology, CSOs do not include political parties, parliamentarians, individual businesses, or mass media.

The advocacy of NGOs concerned with economic and social justice lead to the IMFs active engagement with civil society in the 1980s. In the latter half of the 1990s, NGOs opposed to the IMF policies increased IMF-NGO relations. Notably, the role of the IMF has been controversial since the end of the Cold War, with critics claiming the IMF is apathetic or even hostile to their views of democracy, human rights, and labor rights, and supportive of military dictatorships friendly to American and European corporations. This has lead to some conflict between NGOs and the IMF and thus greater efforts on the part of the IMF in fostering dialogue. However, the IMF-NGO relations still remain modest, and much less than at the United Nations and the World Bank. In general, the IMF holds the position that it is accountable to the governments of its Member States, not to the public at large.

## Avenues for NGO Involvement with the IMF

The IMF lacks the institutional apparatus and accreditation policies for relating to NGOs as is found in many other bodies, such as the United Nations; consultations occur on an ad hoc basis. There are, however, engagements with NGOs through the sharing of information and dialogue, largely at the IMF headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Nonetheless, the main organs of the IMF are not open to NGO participation. These closed bodies include the meeting of the Executive Board, the International Monetary and Finance Committee, and the joint IMF-World Bank Development Committee. The Board of Governors, which meets once a year at the IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings, does allows ad hoc accredited NGOs to attend and observe, without further participatory rights.[[4]](https://www.wangohandbook.org/index.php?title=International_Monetary_Fund_%28IMF%29_and_NGOs#_note-3)

Among avenues in which NGOs are consulted by the IMF are the Annual and Spring Meetings; ad hoc meetings, briefings, seminars, workshops, and conferences; invitations extended by the IMF to review its policies, and so forth.

The IMF’s External Relations Department helps in coordinating relations with NGOs, and relevant departments also handle contacts with the backing of the External Relations Department

## World Bank and NGOs

Bank-NGO relations can be viewed in two parts: multilateral relations, anchored in the Bank-NGO Committee, and bilateral relations, resulting in cooperation in operations or research between the Bank and qualified NGOs, whether or not members of the Committee. When the Bank entered the sectors of rural development, primary and vocational education, and basic health care in the late 1960s, it stepped into the very home ground of the NGOs. Cooperation in the field between the Bank and NGOs became more frequent and gradually a web of ad hoc relations developed. At the end of the 1970s, evidence of mutual interest in more systematic and extensive cooperation resulted in the establishment of the Bank-NGO Committee and the issue, in 1981, of the Bank guidelines to its staff for cooperation with NGOs. The Committee currently includes five Bank senior staff and twenty representatives of a broad spectrum of NGOs from developed and developing countries. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies of Geneva acts as the NGO members’ secretariat. The Committee has two cochairmen: the Director of the Bank’s International Relations Department and the Executive Director of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation. The Committee meets once a year. Initially focused on operational cooperation, it now deals also with development policy issues and development education.

The policy dialogue at the Committee concentrates on the changing world economic environment and its implications for developing countries’ development programs, for aid agencies, and for NGOs. It also covers specific areas: in the 1984 and 1985 meetings, for instance, it included coordination of relief and reconstruction work after man-made or natural disasters, food security, and strategies for the recovery in sub-Saharan Africa.

Development education issues are also discussed at the Committee to identify opportunities for participation in information events of common interest, and to exchange documentation, teaching material, and perceptions on international development issues.

Cooperation with NGOs in sector or project work necessarily calls for a trilateral relationship in which a government has a central role, since the Bank lends only to, or through, governments. Cooperation is often informal: an NGO provides advice on project design suited to local conditions; Bank staff inform NGOs about broad development programs in the country that may pave the ground for NGO initiatives; agreement is reached to avoid overlapping or to build on complementarities between an NGO program and a Bank-financed project. Cooperation can also be formal (that is contractual): the NGO implements part of a project, acts as consultant to the borrower, or provides financing.

Particularly effective in encouraging borrowers to take NGO activities into account—an important element of the Bank policy toward NGOs—are trilateral consultations among government, NGOs, and Bank staff to discuss area or sector development issues. Successful trilateral meetings have recently been held in Eastern and Southern Africa and Indonesia on education, health and population, and multisectoral cooperation. These meetings usually result in specific cooperative agreements and are likely to be replicated in other countries and other sectors.

While it is much too early to evaluate the specific results of Bank-NGO collaboration, the relationship evolving under the guidance of the Bank-NGO Committee is proving to be mutually beneficial. Cooperation with the private voluntary sector can strengthen the activities of development institutions such as the World Bank. Such cooperation could also assist NGOs in widening their impact on development programs. Through the policy dialogue with agencies such as the Bank, NGO work can be placed in a broader international economic perspective, thereby allowing NGOs to participate in discussion of, and action on, development issues in industrial countries as well as in the Third World.

**Guideline on grant request**

Mission

The IMF Grant Review Committee supports charities in the Washington DC metro area and in IMF member countries abroad through annual monetary grants, which focus primarily on fostering economic independence through education and economic development.

Deadline

Grant requests must be submitted between **November 15th through December 31st every year.**

Grant Decisions

The Grant Review Committee meets during February-March and final decisions are communicated to applicants in April the following year. The average grant is US $10,000.

Eligibility

In addition to nonprofit organizations registered under section 501(c)3 under the US Internal Revenue Code, other non-profit organizations will also be considered as potential grant recipients provided they can demonstrate non-profit status in the country where they are headquartered.

All applications will be fully vetted by the grant review committee. Applicants must have established records of effective performance and sound financial management (as reflected, for example, in recent audited financial statements).

Applicants must also agree to report to the IMF on their use of grants received from the IMF.

Restrictions

Multiyear commitments cannot be made but organizations may reapply annually for grants. However, charities who received grants for three consecutive years will not be able to apply for the next two consecutive years.

Grants will not be given to:

 Veterans’ associations, fraternities, sororities, and social clubs.

 Political, lobbying, or labor organizations.

 Private individuals, or for fundraising events.

Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for grants provided that their services are open to all, without any religious qualification or conditions.

How To Apply

All requests can be submitted electronically to <https://grantstream.com/IMF/form/default/en/>.

## NGOs and the Bretton Woods Institutions

The following Section analyzes the impact of World Bank funding and "partnerships" with NGOs. It also looks at NGOs' interactions with and reactions to the IMF.

#### [NGO Involvement in the WTO: A Comparative Perspective (October 2008)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/717.pdf)

Peter Van den Bossche discusses the arguments for and against giving NGOs a larger role in WTO decision making. A more open dialogue with NGOs could possibly increase the legitimacy of the WTO, giving the organization a more democratic and transparent function. However, at the same time some NGOs lack legitimacy because they often advocate on single issues and may therefore not represent all of society’s interests. (Journal of International Economic Law

#### [Civil Society Has Something to Say (October 27, 2008)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2008/1027tosay.htm)

The 2008 Civil Society Development Forum (CSDF) in Geneva concludes that governments have the responsibility to solve the international financial crisis and the food crisis, but that they cannot do this without the help of civil society. This article urges governments to consult with NGOs. It argues that international financial institutions should not impose fixed ideas but use the knowledge that already exists in poor countries to formulate development plans. In the CSDF outcome document, NGOs also criticize the World Trade Organization and argues that its "role in negotiations on agricultural matters should be re-examined." (Inter Press Service)

#### [Brief Observations on the Mechanisms for NGO Participation at the WTO (December 2006)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0612sursanchez.pdf)

This piece from SUR – International Journal on Human Rights critically analyzes some of the institutional and external factors that limit NGO involvement in the World Trade Organization's (WTO) decision-making processes. The author argues that poorly-defined formal procedures for NGO participation pose a major obstacle to how effectively non-state actors can monitor WTO governance. In light of the growing influence and ever-changing profile of the NGO sector, the article highlights the rising demand for "permanent mechanisms" to make the WTO more representative of this "new reality."

#### [Breaking out of the WTO Box (April 1, 2004)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2004/0401box.htm)

In preparation for the UN Conference on Trade and Development in June 2004, NGOs drafted a proposal challenging the neo-liberal agenda of the WTO and suggested the UN as an alternative body to regulate global trade. (Utne)

#### [WTO Mood at Cancun Worsened by NGOs- EU's Fischler (19 September, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0919cancun.htm)

Franz Fischler, Europe's farm chief served as top negotiator at the World Trade Organization's meeting in Cancun. In this AlertNet article Fischler portrays the poor countries' unity at Cancun as resulting from NGO mischief, insisting that "heavy NGO presence" influenced the meeting by creating a "mood of distrust."

#### [WTO's Attack on Public Education (August 10, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0810edu.htm)

World Trade Organization may include education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Students worry that this would reduce public spending on post-secondary institutions and increase dependence on private funding, jeopardizing the affordability of degrees and making research a corporate commodity. (ZNet)

#### [WTO Ignores Calls for Democratic, Inclusive Processes for Cancun (June 20, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0620ignore.htm)

Decrying a lack of transparency and undemocratic processes in the WTO, civil society and ministers from poor countries lobby the organization for open-ended consultations before Cancun. (ATTAC)

#### [IMF, World Bank Join Forces with WTO (May 12, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0512join.htm)

Senior officials of the IMF, World Bank and WTO will meet in Geneva to synchronize their policies on developing nations. NGOs are concerned that the common agenda will make trade and development policy more inflexible, entrenching the organizations one-sided approach to development and widening the gap between the rich and poor. (Inter Press Service)

#### [Rich Nations Continue to Wield Power in Global Bodies (May 6, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/bwi/2003/0506bodies.htm)

NGOs point out the undemocratic governance structures of the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank. Despite professing to create an equitable global community, these institutions concentrate power among world's richest nations. (Inter Press Service)

#### [Regional Consultation on the WTO/Trips Agreement and Access to Medicines: Appropriate Policy Responses (April 17-19, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0419regi.htm)

A Regional Consultation in Sri Lanka on the TRIPS Agreement and Medicines Access strongly recommends that developing countries use the flexibilities in TRIPS to promote public health. This workshop also expresses appreciation for NGO campaigns against exclusive rights of patent-holding pharmaceutical companies. (Third World Net)

#### [NGOs Say "No" to Investment Agreement at WTO (March 21, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0321invest.htm)

Over 50 NGOs call on governments to reject a WTO investment agreement at the Cancun negotiations in September 2003. The agreement restricts government's ability to regulate the actions of foreign multinational companies, causing concern that local communities will be exploited. (Third World Network)

#### [NGOs and Experts Call For Rejection of WTO Agriculture Modalities Paper (February 24, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0224ag.htm)

The WTO Committee on Agriculture considers a proposal for new agricultural trade agreements by the committee chairman, Stuart Harbinson. NGOs call on member states to reject the proposal, claiming it will consolidate the power of multinational agricultural firms at the expense of farmers in developing nations. (Third World Network)

#### [150 NGOs Challenge Democracy Deficit at the WTO and Call for an End to Exclusive Meetings (November 14, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1114democracy.htm)

Over 150 NGOs criticize the "invitation only" WTO mini-ministerial in Sydney, where 25 WTO members from all regions will discuss pressing issues at an "unofficial meeting." NGOs argue that by building a consensus among select members, the group "de facto and illegally takes leadership of the organization." (Focus on the Global South)

#### [WTO Boss Says Free Trade Talks Gathering Momentum (November 12, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1112trade.htm)

WTO chief Supachai Panitchpakdi claims he will consider NGOs' concerns about the negative effects of privatizing water, healthcare, and education and liberalizing the financial sector. (Reuters)

#### [NGOs Call on Trade Ministers to Reject Closed WTO Process (November 4, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1104reject.htm)

As the 5th Ministerial nears, NGOs urge trade ministers to reject exclusive, "unofficial" meetings that include only a small portion of the member states. These meetings serve to build a consensus among the few, which is then presented as "a take-it-or-leave-it package" that often presses positions counter to development goals. (WTO Watch)

#### [ASEAN Rejects US Call for NGO Access to WTO Dispute Process (September 17, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0917asean.htm)

ASEAN diplomats reject the US proposal for WTO transparency, which would allow NGOs unrestricted access to dispute settlement panels and amicus curiae briefs. (Business Times)

#### [European Civil Society Groups Launch Campaign on Global Trade and Investment Talks (September 13, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0913trade.htm)

European NGOs call on governments to "fundamentally re-orient the rules of the trade system to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development and withdraw proposals for investment negotiations in the WTO." (Friends of the Earth)

#### [Globalization's Bad Effects Discussed (September 12, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0912globaliz.htm)

NGOs, labor groups, and businesses met to discuss ways for governments to mitigate globalization's negative impacts. They insisted that the WTO must consider this debate before commencing further negotiations on trade issues. (BusinessWorld)

#### [NGOs Preparing for the World Social Forum (January 9, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/conf/2002/0109Mali.htm)

NGO representatives meeting in Mali to plan for the World Social Forum recognize the need for international experts within African NGOs to allow them to play a constructive role in discussions with the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund. (Inter Press Service)

#### [NGOs Urge Support for Pro-Public Health Interpretation of TRIPS (September 19, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/2001/19r.htm)

The civil society is concerned about the TRIPS agreement, demanding its revision at the Doha Conference. Public health and human rights protection should carry more weight within the protection of intellectual property rights. (Third World Network).

#### [NGOs Accuse WTO of Hidden Agenda Behind "Environment" Seminar (March 26, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/bwi/2001/seminar.htm)

What the WTO wants in reality is to gather Asian support for a new trade round. NGOs refuse to participate at the meeting (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

#### [Civil Society Groups Spark Power Battle within WTO (November 24, 2000)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2000/1201.htm)

Member States fear the intrusion of NGOs in legal proceedings at the World Trade Organization, expressing disagreement with the Appellate Body's decision to allow NGO participation in the case opposing France and Canada at the WTO. (IPS news reports)

#### [Giving the Public a Voice in the Protection of the Global Environment (Winter 2000/2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2001/peel-wto.htm)

The author, who thinks that NGOs can address environmental cross-border issues better than states, calls for strengthening the role of NGOs in international institutions such as the European Court of Justice and the WTO and standardizing NGO access. (Colorado Journal of International Law and Policy)

#### [In the Aftermath of Seattle: Backlash Reigns (October 3, 2000)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/protest/2000/barry.htm)

A critique of the "shut- it-down- strategy" stressing that "some form of multilateral economic governance is fundamentally important". Instead of condemning international institutions, protesters should focus on the US role in the development of a corporate-led globalization. (In Focus)

#### [NGO Statement on the WTO High-Level Symposia (March 17- 18, 1999)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto99-2.htm)

NGOs submit a statement to the WTO for consideration during the WTO High-Level Symposia on Trade and Environment (March 15 -16, 1999) and Trade and Development.

#### [NGOs Unwelcome at Forum (November 30, 1999)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/1999/wto.htm)

Report from the World Trade Observer on the WTO-NGO symposium in Seattle. NGOs voiced criticism of the WTO and suggestions for change.

## NGOs and the World Trade Organization

This section analyzes NGO activity on the WTO. NGOs have led the citizens around the world to challenge the economic policies of the World Trade Organization as well as the Organization's closed meetings and lack of accountability.

#### [NGO Involvement in the WTO: A Comparative Perspective (October 2008)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/717.pdf)

Peter Van den Bossche discusses the arguments for and against giving NGOs a larger role in WTO decision making. A more open dialogue with NGOs could possibly increase the legitimacy of the WTO, giving the organization a more democratic and transparent function. However, at the same time some NGOs lack legitimacy because they often advocate on single issues and may therefore not represent all of society’s interests. (Journal of International Economic Law)

#### [Civil Society Has Something to Say (October 27, 2008)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2008/1027tosay.htm)

The 2008 Civil Society Development Forum (CSDF) in Geneva concludes that governments have the responsibility to solve the international financial crisis and the food crisis, but that they cannot do this without the help of civil society. This article urges governments to consult with NGOs. It argues that international financial institutions should not impose fixed ideas but use the knowledge that already exists in poor countries to formulate development plans. In the CSDF outcome document, NGOs also criticize the World Trade Organization and argues that its "role in negotiations on agricultural matters should be re-examined." (Inter Press Service)

#### [Brief Observations on the Mechanisms for NGO Participation at the WTO (December 2006)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0612sursanchez.pdf)

This piece from SUR – International Journal on Human Rights critically analyzes some of the institutional and external factors that limit NGO involvement in the World Trade Organization's (WTO) decision-making processes. The author argues that poorly-defined formal procedures for NGO participation pose a major obstacle to how effectively non-state actors can monitor WTO governance. In light of the growing influence and ever-changing profile of the NGO sector, the article highlights the rising demand for "permanent mechanisms" to make the WTO more representative of this "new reality."

#### [Breaking out of the WTO Box (April 1, 2004)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2004/0401box.htm)

In preparation for the UN Conference on Trade and Development in June 2004, NGOs drafted a proposal challenging the neo-liberal agenda of the WTO and suggested the UN as an alternative body to regulate global trade. (Utne)

#### [WTO Mood at Cancun Worsened by NGOs- EU's Fischler (19 September, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0919cancun.htm)

Franz Fischler, Europe's farm chief served as top negotiator at the World Trade Organization's meeting in Cancun. In this AlertNet article Fischler portrays the poor countries' unity at Cancun as resulting from NGO mischief, insisting that "heavy NGO presence" influenced the meeting by creating a "mood of distrust."

#### [WTO's Attack on Public Education (August 10, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0810edu.htm)

World Trade Organization may include education in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Students worry that this would reduce public spending on post-secondary institutions and increase dependence on private funding, jeopardizing the affordability of degrees and making research a corporate commodity. (ZNet)

#### [WTO Ignores Calls for Democratic, Inclusive Processes for Cancun (June 20, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0620ignore.htm)

Decrying a lack of transparency and undemocratic processes in the WTO, civil society and ministers from poor countries lobby the organization for open-ended consultations before Cancun. (ATTAC)

#### [IMF, World Bank Join Forces with WTO (May 12, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0512join.htm)

Senior officials of the IMF, World Bank and WTO will meet in Geneva to synchronize their policies on developing nations. NGOs are concerned that the common agenda will make trade and development policy more inflexible, entrenching the organizations one-sided approach to development and widening the gap between the rich and poor. (Inter Press Service)

#### [Rich Nations Continue to Wield Power in Global Bodies (May 6, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/bwi/2003/0506bodies.htm)

NGOs point out the undemocratic governance structures of the UN, WTO, IMF and World Bank. Despite professing to create an equitable global community, these institutions concentrate power among world's richest nations. (Inter Press Service)

#### [Regional Consultation on the WTO/Trips Agreement and Access to Medicines: Appropriate Policy Responses (April 17-19, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto/2003/0419regi.htm)

A Regional Consultation in Sri Lanka on the TRIPS Agreement and Medicines Access strongly recommends that developing countries use the flexibilities in TRIPS to promote public health. This workshop also expresses appreciation for NGO campaigns against exclusive rights of patent-holding pharmaceutical companies. (Third World Net)

#### [NGOs Say "No" to Investment Agreement at WTO (March 21, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0321invest.htm)

Over 50 NGOs call on governments to reject a WTO investment agreement at the Cancun negotiations in September 2003. The agreement restricts government's ability to regulate the actions of foreign multinational companies, causing concern that local communities will be exploited. (Third World Network)

#### [NGOs and Experts Call For Rejection of WTO Agriculture Modalities Paper (February 24, 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2003/0224ag.htm)

The WTO Committee on Agriculture considers a proposal for new agricultural trade agreements by the committee chairman, Stuart Harbinson. NGOs call on member states to reject the proposal, claiming it will consolidate the power of multinational agricultural firms at the expense of farmers in developing nations. (Third World Network)

#### [150 NGOs Challenge Democracy Deficit at the WTO and Call for an End to Exclusive Meetings (November 14, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1114democracy.htm)

Over 150 NGOs criticize the "invitation only" WTO mini-ministerial in Sydney, where 25 WTO members from all regions will discuss pressing issues at an "unofficial meeting." NGOs argue that by building a consensus among select members, the group "de facto and illegally takes leadership of the organization." (Focus on the Global South)

#### [WTO Boss Says Free Trade Talks Gathering Momentum (November 12, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1112trade.htm)

WTO chief Supachai Panitchpakdi claims he will consider NGOs' concerns about the negative effects of privatizing water, healthcare, and education and liberalizing the financial sector. (Reuters)

#### [NGOs Call on Trade Ministers to Reject Closed WTO Process (November 4, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/1104reject.htm)

As the 5th Ministerial nears, NGOs urge trade ministers to reject exclusive, "unofficial" meetings that include only a small portion of the member states. These meetings serve to build a consensus among the few, which is then presented as "a take-it-or-leave-it package" that often presses positions counter to development goals. (WTO Watch)

#### [ASEAN Rejects US Call for NGO Access to WTO Dispute Process (September 17, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0917asean.htm)

ASEAN diplomats reject the US proposal for WTO transparency, which would allow NGOs unrestricted access to dispute settlement panels and amicus curiae briefs. (Business Times)

#### [European Civil Society Groups Launch Campaign on Global Trade and Investment Talks (September 13, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0913trade.htm)

European NGOs call on governments to "fundamentally re-orient the rules of the trade system to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development and withdraw proposals for investment negotiations in the WTO." (Friends of the Earth)

#### [Globalization's Bad Effects Discussed (September 12, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2002/0912globaliz.htm)

NGOs, labor groups, and businesses met to discuss ways for governments to mitigate globalization's negative impacts. They insisted that the WTO must consider this debate before commencing further negotiations on trade issues. (BusinessWorld)

#### [NGOs Preparing for the World Social Forum (January 9, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/conf/2002/0109Mali.htm)

NGO representatives meeting in Mali to plan for the World Social Forum recognize the need for international experts within African NGOs to allow them to play a constructive role in discussions with the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund. (Inter Press Service)

#### [NGOs Urge Support for Pro-Public Health Interpretation of TRIPS (September 19, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/2001/19r.htm)

The civil society is concerned about the TRIPS agreement, demanding its revision at the Doha Conference. Public health and human rights protection should carry more weight within the protection of intellectual property rights. (Third World Network).

#### [NGOs Accuse WTO of Hidden Agenda Behind "Environment" Seminar (March 26, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/bwi/2001/seminar.htm)

What the WTO wants in reality is to gather Asian support for a new trade round. NGOs refuse to participate at the meeting (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

#### [Civil Society Groups Spark Power Battle within WTO (November 24, 2000)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2000/1201.htm)

Member States fear the intrusion of NGOs in legal proceedings at the World Trade Organization, expressing disagreement with the Appellate Body's decision to allow NGO participation in the case opposing France and Canada at the WTO. (IPS news reports)

#### [Giving the Public a Voice in the Protection of the Global Environment (Winter 2000/2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/2001/peel-wto.htm)

The author, who thinks that NGOs can address environmental cross-border issues better than states, calls for strengthening the role of NGOs in international institutions such as the European Court of Justice and the WTO and standardizing NGO access. (Colorado Journal of International Law and Policy)

#### [In the Aftermath of Seattle: Backlash Reigns (October 3, 2000)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/protest/2000/barry.htm)

A critique of the "shut- it-down- strategy" stressing that "some form of multilateral economic governance is fundamentally important". Instead of condemning international institutions, protesters should focus on the US role in the development of a corporate-led globalization. (In Focus)

#### [NGO Statement on the WTO High-Level Symposia (March 17- 18, 1999)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/wto99-2.htm)

NGOs submit a statement to the WTO for consideration during the WTO High-Level Symposia on Trade and Environment (March 15 -16, 1999) and Trade and Development.

#### [NGOs Unwelcome at Forum (November 30, 1999)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/wto/1999/wto.htm)

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## NGOs and the European Union

The European Union has a supranational governance structure, which means it is able to make decisions without the unanimous agreement of national governments. To address the criticism concerning its democratic deficit, the different EU institutions have included NGOs in the policy making process. With their expertise and representative member base, NGOs can provide valuable input and help legitimize the decision-making process within the EU. NGOs have played an important role in developing European policy. Since the early 1990's, they have built coalitions with national and regional governments, industry, other interest groups and members of the European parliament as well as the European Commission. Lobbying generally favors big NGOs with enough resources to provide robust facts and scientifically based evidence in their advocacy work. The EU consults with NGOs in different ways, for instance through green papers (discussion papers), white papers (official proposals), communications, advisory committees and ad hoc consultations. The EU commission has allocated more than 1 billion Euros annually in support of NGO projects and there are over 15 000 lobbyists and 2 600 special interest groups in Brussels.

#### [EU and Civil Society: The Case of NGOs and Humanitarian Intervention (July 2009)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Irrera.pdf)

Despite the European Union's growing awareness of NGOs, the regional body does not have the same open dialogue with NGOs as the UN does. Consequently, NGOs have strengthened their cooperation in the hope of having stronger relations with the Union. This paper shows the historical development of the EU's increasing engagement with NGOs, and it emphasizes the important knowledge NGOs can provide in its decision-making bodies. (European University Institute)

#### [EU: Corporate Lobbying Grows (December 22, 2004)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/tncs/2004/1222murkylobby.htm)

Campaigners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) urge the European Commission to "curb the excessive influence" of murky and influential corporate lobbying in Brussels. The NGO coalition calls for advocacy legislation based on transparency and accountability, under which lobby groups, corporations and public relations firms would have to report openly about their agenda and financing. (IPS Terraviva)

#### [Commission Keen to Draw More on Organized Civil Society (December 11, 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2002/1211civsoc.htm)

The European Commission considers adopting standards for outside consultation, which would include input from organized civil society. Religious communities and NGOs have proposed specific frameworks for dialogue with the Commission, but "the Commission believes these proposals go beyond general principles and minimum applicable standards on consultation." (European Union Online)

#### [European Civil Society Coming of Age (May 2002)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2002/05civsoc.htm)

This paper discusses the evolving definition of civil society, ways for NGOs to participate democratically in policy-making, and the importance of NGO transparency and accountability. It also looks at NGOs' attempts to create a system of formal representation within the European Union and their varying degrees of success. (The Platform of European Social NGOs)

#### [Listening To Civil Society: What Relationship Between the European Commission and NGOs? (June 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2001/0601ecas.htm)

The European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) fears that the European Commission may become overwhelmed by the number of NGOs requesting involvement in discussions at the highest level. Civil society would be damaged if the Commission were to withdraw from some activities or only liase with a few, large NGOs, due to a simple lack of staff.

#### [Compromise Payment Marks End Of Commission-NGO Dispute (May 9, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/bwi/2001/0511clong.htm)

The European Commission and CLONG (the umbrella group of development NGOs) signed a compromise to settle their four-month dispute over the outcome of an audit process. (Europe Information Service)

#### [NGO Liaison Committee Forced to Disband (February 2, 2001)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2001/clong.htm)

An audit report of the Liaison Committee of European NGOs to the EU finds no evidence of fraud. However, the policy of EU development officials is "zero tolerance" for alleged financial discrepancies, thus is forcing the Committee to disband (InterPress Service).

#### [The Commission and NGOs: Building a Stronger Partnership (April 15, 2000)](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgc/ong/en/communication.pdf)

This paper highlights and describes the relationship between the European Commission and NGOs, while maintaining that some improvements should be made to render it even stronger. (European Commission)

#### [Report on EC-NGO Consultation in Brussels (1999)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/1999/ec9903.htm)

MS-Danish Association for International Co-operation's brief notes on meeting held on January 27th 1999. Provides insight into the European Commission's relationship with civil society.

## NGOs and other International Institutions

#### [Tied Aid Debate Tests Donor Ambitions Before Busan Summit (November 1, 2011)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role-of-ngos-in-the-international-arena/50933-tied-aid-debate-tests-donor-ambitions-before-busan-summit.html?itemid=738)

The 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that will be held in Busan, South Korea in late November will look at the controversial “tied aid” requirements, where donors insist aid is spent on goods and services provided by companies based in their own countries. The European Network on Debt and Development has report that $20-$25 billion of aid is given in this form and fails to improve developing countries’ economies, reduces the purchasing power of aid distributors, and increases the risk of unsuitable aid programs.  (*Guardian*)

#### [Civil Society Urges G20 to Focus on Rights at Financial and Climate Negotiations (October 28, 2011)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role-of-ngos-in-the-international-arena/50935-civil-society-urges-g20-to-focus-on-rights-at-financial-and-climate-negotiations.html?itemid=id#738)

Ahead of the upcoming G20 Summit in France, a group of NGOs, including CIVICUS, DAWN, and the Center for Economic and Social Rights, have prepared a statement urging G20 leaders to remember human rights when debating financial regulation and climate change. The statement calls on leaders to take measures which requires all parties to take responsibility and acknowledge universal human rights. *(Social Watch)*

#### [Carving Out a New Aid Order at Busan (October 4, 2011)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role-of-ngos-in-the-international-arena/50779-carving-out-a-new-aid-order-at-busan.html)

In this *IPS Terraviva* interview, the director of IBON International Tony Tujan suggests the possibility of an “aid revolution” at the upcoming Busan high level forum on Aid Effectiveness. Tujan argues that with the rise of South-South cooperation amongst emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil, there will be a crucial opportunity to stop the continuation of a “Northern-dominated aid architecture.”

#### [NGOs Must Play Key Role in Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development (August 26, 2011)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/role-of-ngos-in-the-international-arena/50635-ngos-must-play-key-role-in-rio20-summit-on-sustainable-development.html)

In this *IPS Terraviva* interview, Michael Renner of the Worldwatch Institute emphasizes the important role of NGOs in the lead up to the Rio+ 20 conference in Brazil 2012. Renner highlights that NGOs need to hold governments accountable for not following through on commitments to sustainable development. According to Renner, “if the public cannot hold governments and corporations accountable, then commitments may never properly be translated into action.” Renner correctly identifies the need for a strong grassroots presence that advocates for and represents a non-governmental perspective at global conferences.

#### [Islamic Civil Society Organizations Form Humanitarian Forum (October 29, 2005)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/other/2005/1029muslim.htm)

Since 9/11, Western governments and civil society have increasingly scrutinized Islamic NGOs. As a result, a British-based Islamic NGO has convened an ongoing five-year forum for NGOs based in the Middle East. In this forum, Muslim organizations will collaborate, and learn world standards for civil society that they would otherwise not be informed of, since distrust from other NGOs often blocks vital lines of communication. (Yemen Observer)

#### [African Civil Society and the African Union: Time for Self-Organization? (June 16, 2005)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/other/2005/0616aungos.htm)

At the 2005 African Union (AU) Heads of State Summit, the AU opted, without explanation, not to sponsor a parallel civil society summit for African NGOs. Pambazuka questions why "at a time when rock musicians and pop stars across the West can claim to have influence on the future of Africa," African NGOs have been silenced on the issues most pertinent to their existence. In order to deflect the risk of obsolescence, African NGOs must organize quickly to coordinate their own, independent meeting.

#### [NGOs and the OECD (June 2003)](https://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/other/2003/0606oecd.htm)

This article says that the OECD takes an interest in increasing its engagement with civil society. The article also describes the mechanisms within the OECD that NGOs can use for advocacy. (BOND