



Preliminary guidelines to govern ICSD-UN engagement activities

Adopted by ICSD Board on 18 May 2026

Short-to medium term strategy (2026-2029)

Mission and participation

- Engagement in United Nations (UN) processes is guided by the ICSD's mission which is to advance knowledge and practice of social development around the world to eradicate poverty, improve standards of living, and promote human equality and ecological sustainability (ICSD Constitution July 2025).
- Participate in UN structures and processes via the UN Commission for Social Development (CSocD) in cooperation with UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UN Women and CSocD sub-committees.
- Annually subscribe to and actively participate in the NGO Committee for Social Development (NGO CSocD) which provides a platform for civil society engagement with UN CSocD.

Engagement is informed by a learning approach

- This entails learning about how the UN system works such as identifying the working groups, structures and the different locations in which they operate, identifying a few strategic focus areas for collaboration and gradually strengthening the ICSD's visibility in UN processes.
- Build knowledge and skill in how to engage in global social policy developments and advocacy.
- Partnering with likeminded organisations, forming coalitions to support and advocate common positions on social development issues and priorities.
- Optimise participation of ICSD members and its branches in UN processes e.g. written and oral statements, hosting of side events and creating opportunities for ICSD members to participate in UN processes, exchange information, share communication of UN activities and events and contribute to global social policy debates.
- Harness and leverage ICSD member expertise across the globe in areas of interest relevant to UN structures that we are engaging with.

Focus of engagement

- The focus will be on the implementation of the Doha Political Declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development (SWSSD) and Agenda 2030 (SDGs). The ICSD's engagement will be directed by the organization's statement and response to the draft

Doha Declaration adopted by the ICSD Board in October 2025. This includes sharing actionable solutions and tested evidence-based innovation to address the main priorities and cross cutting themes of the SWSSD.

- CSocD annual cycle engagement (February session in New York City will be the anchor point) with a structured year-round preparation process.
- Build awareness among members and branches of how they could be involved and encourage regional inputs.
- Encourage cooperation of ICSD branches in UN regional structures.
- Explore opportunities for joint research projects to inform positions and actionable solutions.
- Aligning the SDI journal to CSocD session themes and via biennial and regional conferences.

Coalitions, partnering and leadership

- Build influence through partnering with international organizations with similar goals.
- Explore formalising partnerships with IFSW, IASSW and ICSW.
- Develop structured joint work plans with shared statements and hosting of side events.

Guiding principles

Transparency of decisions taken.

Accountability to the Board and members, providing clear and regular reports.

Diligence in our engagement with UN processes.

Participation of ICSD members in UN engagements as far as is possible.

Service – guided by a service ethos.

Foster global cooperation and solidarity.

Priority themes

Five themes that were consistently prioritised in the ICSD-UN Engagement member survey were: poverty, employment and decent work, social inclusion, digital inclusion and gender equality. Other themes identified were the SDGs, social justice, community driven just energy transitions, care and social support systems and social protection

(ICSD-UN Engagement Survey results April 2026).

The ICSD's limited financial resources and human capacity must be considered when choosing priorities.

Consideration will be given to selecting a small number of themes for more focused engagement.

ICSD representation in UN CSocD and NGO CSocD

- The ICSD will have **seven representatives** (including the President) who will be eligible to receive UN passes.
- Appointments will be for a three-year term with the option of renewal depending on performance. Good performance may include attendance of meetings; execution of responsibilities, timely reporting; active coordination with ICSD UN representatives, building strong networks and partnerships with likeminded organizations, proactive leadership and engagement in areas of responsibility and representing ICSD positions.
- A pragmatic approach will be adopted considering expertise, time, proximity to UN headquarters, and resources to attend UN meetings.
- The President (or his/her nominee) is the ICSD's formal representative recognised by the ICSD's ECOSOC status and the ICSD's Constitution: *it states that the President represents the consortium to external public, other organizations, and the international community* (Section IX Officers).
- The President in consultation with the ICSD Board appoints:
 - ✓ A focal point person responsible for coordinating participation, monitoring UN developments, and communicating with the Board. This focal point person will work closely with the President and Vice Presidents to guide the organization's strategy. The focal person will be responsible for providing regular reports to the President and the Board.
 - ✓ The ICSD's representative on the NGO CSocD. This person is responsible for attending monthly meetings, planning meetings, selected committee meetings, monitors civil society developments and facilitates involvement of regional branch representatives in civil society forums and attends the NGO CSocD annual meeting in February. The NGO representative reports to the focal person and the President.
 - ✓ Three regional focal point representatives from the branches. These persons will be the liaison between the branches and the focal point person and the NGO representative. Regional representatives will be responsible for facilitating regional participation in UN processes. The regional representatives will report to the focal point person.
- The seven representatives will form an **ICSD-UN engagement sub-committee** which will work together to develop the ICSD strategy, ensure its implementation, monitor ICSD engagement with UN processes and evaluate the strategy and make recommendations to the Board. The focal person with support from sub-committee members will produce annual reports on the ICSD's engagement with the UN; keep

records of ICSD engagements, provide regular reports to members and branches via the ICSD website, newsletter and social media.

Appointment of ICSD-UN representatives

- The President constitutes an ad hoc appointment committee. The committee will consist of the President and two persons drawn from the branch chairs, the Secretary General and the Associate Secretary General, Branches (in total 5 people).
- **Selection criteria:** relevant expertise; knowledge and skills in global social development (specific to the implementation of the Doha Declaration); some experience of UN processes; experience in building coalitions for change; networking skills, diplomacy, negotiation and conflict resolution skills and have time to dedicate to the task and be able to raise the funds to cover the costs of their participation in CSocD meetings when it convenes in February each year.
- Given the financial constraints of the ICSD, of its members and institutions, especially in the Global South, representation may be skewed to applicants from Northern countries. The board and branches need to be mindful of this situation including diversity of representation. Creating opportunities to participate virtually could also help.
- The President puts out a call for expressions of interest with a short window of two-three weeks.
- Interested applicants must submit a letter of motivation and an up-to-date curriculum vitae that demonstrates the knowledge and skills required for the positions including how they will fund their participation.
- Should there be strong competition between applicants, the appointments committee could decide to interview candidates.
- The appointments committee will be expected to apply the criteria consistently and develop a scoring system.
- The President recommends the appointment of representatives to the Board for approval.

Oversight and accountability

The President and the board are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the strategy is implemented. The execution of the strategy will be the responsibility of the ICSD-UN Engagement sub-committee which includes the following.

- Convening of sub-committee meetings as required including keeping records of meetings.

- Administrative coordination may include simple tracking of events, statements, and participation in UN related initiatives so that these activities can be documented and reported on.
- Representatives are expected to provide short-written updates after major meetings or events, highlighting key discussions and any opportunities for further engagement.
- ICSD's NGO representative will provide reports to the focal point representative and the President.
- Focal point representative will in turn provide reports on overall inputs and activities to the board at each meeting.
- Strategic positions/written and oral statements that are developed with international organizations will need to be developed collaboratively and approved by the President or persons delegated by the president to do so.
- Where representatives are unproductive, they should be asked to step aside following proper procedures. The focal point person will be responsible for raising performance issues with the representative. Should these issues persist, the focal point person will raise the matter with the sub-committee who will engage with the representative. The representative will be given the opportunity to have a right of reply. Should the situation not improve, the focal point person will liaise with the President or delegated Vice President to address the problem.
- Representatives need to be mindful of their responsibility to represent the organization and not their personal positions.
- ICSD-UN sub-committee will be responsible for the collation of annual and four yearly ECOSOC reports.

Review of the guidelines

The guidelines will be reviewed annually by the subcommittee, and should urgent corrective measures be needed, recommendations will be made to amend the guidelines which must in turn be approved by the board. Amendments to these guidelines will be recorded below.

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