



**Congressional
Research Service**

Informing the legislative debate since 1914

Membership in the United Nations and Its Specialized Agencies

-name redacted-

Specialist in International Relations

-name redacted-

Specialist in International Relations

June 19, 2014

Congressional Research Service

7-....

www.crs.gov

R43614

Summary

Since the United Nations (U.N.) was established in 1945, the U.S. government, including many Members of Congress, has maintained an ongoing interest in the criteria and process for membership in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The United Nations currently has 193 member states and two observer non-member states—the Holy See (Vatican) and “Palestine.”

Criteria and Process

The decision to admit a state into the United Nations is made by the U.N. General Assembly on the recommendation of the U.N. Security Council, including all five permanent members (P-5): the United States, China, France, United Kingdom, and Russia. Membership is open to all “peace-loving states” that accept the obligations contained in the U.N. Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to carry out such obligations. Given the imprecise nature of such criteria, many member states have broadly interpreted the conditions for U.N. membership. Consequently, global and domestic politics play a primary role in many membership decisions.

Each of the United Nations’ 16 specialized agencies has its own constitution, rules, membership, governance, and financial resources. As such, the process and criteria for admitting new members vary depending on the organization. In 11 specialized agencies, U.N. membership gives a state access to membership in the agency without requiring its admission to be approved by the current membership. Of these 11 agencies, 3 also provide membership, without a vote, to any member of any other specialized agency. Two other specialized agencies require a separate voting process to admit new members.

U.S. Role and Policy

Decisions on U.N. membership are subject to veto by any of the P-5; thus, the United States plays a significant role in determining U.N. membership. The United States has a more limited role in U.N. specialized agencies because decisions to admit new members to these bodies are generally made by the entire membership and each member has one vote. U.S. membership decisions in both the United Nations and its specialized agencies lie primarily with the executive branch, which represents the United States in U.N. and other multilateral fora.

Although Congress often does not play a large role in determining U.N. membership, Members have sought to influence U.S. policy on the issue through legislation advocating or opposing the membership of various countries and entities—including Israel, Montenegro, Kosovo, South Africa, China/Taiwan, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Notably, in the mid-1990s, Congress enacted two separate laws that prohibit funding to U.N. entities that (1) admit the PLO as a member, and (2) grant full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood (see Section 410 of P.L. 103-236 and Section 414 of P.L. 101-246). The United States currently withholds its assessed and voluntary contributions to the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which admitted Palestine as a member in 2011.

Key Issues

Members of Congress may consider the following issues related to U.N. membership:

- **Impact on other U.N. entities and international organizations.** Membership in one U.N. organization can potentially affect membership in other U.N. entities. Some experts also suggest that U.N. membership could affect membership in other international organizations, such as the International Criminal Court.
- **U.S. contributions to U.N. entities.** Based on restrictions in U.S. law, Palestinian membership in U.N. bodies could have implications for U.S. funding of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. For example, when Palestine was admitted to UNESCO, it became eligible for membership, without a vote, in three specialized agencies—the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). To date, Palestine has not joined any of these specialized agencies. The United States is a member of IFAD and WIPO, but not UNIDO.
- **Political considerations in membership criteria and process.** Many experts agree that each U.N. member state’s decision to admit a new state is largely political. The extent to which the criteria outlined in the U.N. Charter has been applied to membership applications has often depended on geopolitical issues at the time, and member states’ national self-interests and views on the role and nature of the United Nations.

This report may be updated as events warrant.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Paths to U.N. Membership: Criteria and Process	4
Criteria.....	5
Process.....	5
Role of the Security Council	5
Role of the General Assembly.....	6
Suspension or Loss of Membership.....	7
U.N. Non-member Observer States.....	8
Membership in U.N. Specialized Agencies	8
Palestinian Membership Efforts.....	9
U.S. Policy	11
Issues for Congress	13
Impact on Membership in Other U.N. Entities.....	13
U.S. Contributions to U.N. System Entities	13
Role of Politics in Membership Criteria and Process.....	13
Looking Ahead: Key Questions.....	14

Figures

Figure 1. U.N. Membership Growth, 1945–Present.....	3
---	---

Tables

Table A-1. Provisions Addressing Membership in U.N. Specialized Agencies and One Related Organization	16
--	----

Appendixes

Appendix. Membership-Related Provisions for U.N. Specialized Agencies.....	15
--	----

Contacts

Author Contact Information.....	27
---------------------------------	----

Introduction

Membership in the United Nations (U.N.) has been an issue of ongoing interest for Congress. Over the years, Members have focused on the process and criteria for U.N. membership, as well as on U.S. policy and roles in determining membership. Currently, the United Nations has 193 members. The organization also has two non-member observer states, the Holy See (Vatican) and “Palestine,” which have standing invitations to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the U.N. General Assembly.¹ Each of the U.N. system’s 15 specialized agencies—which are independent international intergovernmental organizations with their own constitutions, rules, and budgets—have different criteria and processes for membership. Examples of specialized agencies include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), U.N. Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and World Health Organization (WHO).²

Under Article 4 of the U.N. Charter, the U.N. Security Council and U.N. General Assembly are the primary bodies involved in the process for considering U.N. membership applications. Security Council recommendations on membership are subject to veto by any of the five permanent members. As a member of the P-5, the United States plays a key role in determining U.N. membership. It has less influence on membership decisions in the U.N. specialized agencies, where each member country has one vote and there is no veto power.

Any position on membership the United States takes in both the United Nations and its specialized agencies lies primarily with the executive branch, which represents the United States in U.N. fora. Generally, congressional activities related to U.N. membership have focused on supporting or opposing the membership of specific states or groups—including Israel, Kosovo, Montenegro, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), South Africa, and Taiwan, among others.

This report highlights key steps in the process for attaining membership in the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It discusses the capacities associated with U.N. membership and observer status, as well as criteria for and implications of membership. It also examines related U.S. legislation and recent congressional and Obama Administration actions. For an analysis of

The United States & the United Nations

The United States supports the mission and mandate of the United Nations. It played a key role in establishing the organization in 1945, and serves as one of five permanent members on the Security Council.

As the single largest financial contributor to the U.N. system—assessed at 22% of the U.N. regular budget—the United States has an interest in ensuring the United Nations operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. funds to the organization each fiscal year and often uses U.N. mechanisms—particularly those related to the maintenance of international peace and security and development—to further U.S. foreign policy objectives. At the same time, many Members have also been critical of the United Nations, and have called for sweeping reform of its management and organizational structure.³

¹ This report refers to “Palestine” in the context of the U.N. system. According to U.N. General Assembly resolution 43/167, adopted December 15, 1988, “the designation ‘Palestine’ should be used in place of the designation ‘Palestine Liberation Organization’ in the United Nations system.”

² For a full list of U.N. specialized agencies, see “U.N. Specialized Agencies” text box below.

³ For more information, see CRS Report RL33848, *United Nations Reform: Background and Issues for Congress*, by (name redacted), and CRS Report RL33611, *United Nations System Funding: Congressional Issues*, by (name redacted).

country or organization-specific aspects of U.N. or specialized agency membership, including U.S. policy, see

- CRS Report RL34074, *The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations*, by (name redacted);
- CRS Report R41952, *U.S.-Taiwan Relationship: Overview of Policy Issues*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted); and
- CRS Report R42999, *The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

Background

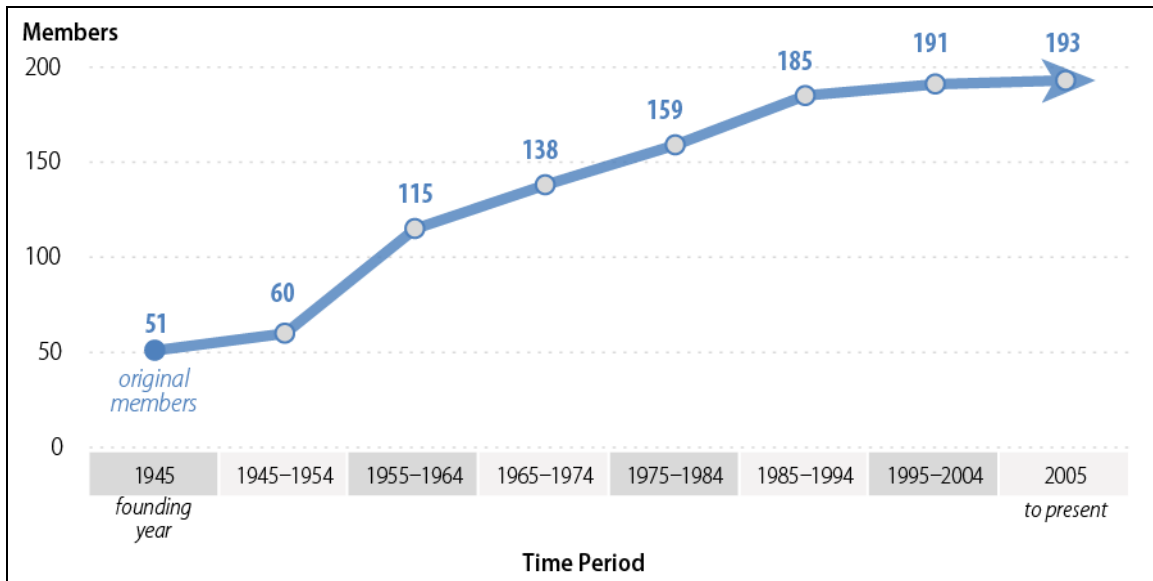
The criteria and process for admitting new U.N. members were established in 1945 by the 51 original members of the United Nations in Article 4 of the U.N. Charter.⁴ U.N. membership decisions are determined by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council.⁵ Membership is open to all “peace-loving states” that accept the obligations contained in the Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to carry out such obligations. Many experts contend that the imprecise nature of these criteria has allowed member states to broadly interpret the conditions for membership, in some cases causing political considerations to have significant weight on membership decisions.⁶

The pace at which new members have been admitted to the United Nations has generally reflected the geo-political circumstances of the time. For example, Cold War tensions contributed to the limited number of new members admitted during the organization’s first decade. Both Eastern and Western bloc countries were concerned that new members might strengthen the voting power of the other bloc; consequently, just nine states were admitted between 1945 and 1954 (see **Figure 1**). From the mid-1950s through the 1970s, U.N. membership more than doubled as former European colonies in Africa were admitted. Another wave of new members resulted from the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia in the 1990s and early 2000s. The four states most recently admitted as members were Switzerland (2002), Timor-Leste (2002), Montenegro (2006), and South Sudan (2011).

⁴ The U.N. Charter was adopted and opened for signature at the San Francisco Conference in June 1945. Participants in the Conference were those countries that had declared war on Germany and Japan and had subscribed by January 1, 1942 to the United Nations Declaration. For more information, see http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/sanfrancisco_conference.shtml. A copy of the U.N. Charter is available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>.

⁵ Some details of the process for U.N. membership are outlined in the U.N. General Assembly’s and U.N. Security Council’s rules of procedures. For more detailed information, see the “Paths to U.N. Membership: Criteria and Process” section.

⁶ “Membership and Representation of States,” in *A Concise Encyclopedia of the United Nations*, ed. Helmut Volger (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002), pp. 369-371.

Figure I. U.N. Membership Growth, 1945–Present

Source: United Nations, adapted by CRS.

A key area of ongoing debate regarding U.N. membership is the organization’s possible role in determining statehood. By international practice, a state is generally understood to be “an entity that has a defined territory and a permanent population, under the control of its own government, and that engages in, or has the capacity to engage in, formal relations with other such entities.”⁷ On the one hand, the United Nations—as an organization of independent states—does not recognize states; rather, states recognize states. As such, many experts and observers, including the United Nations itself, argue that the organization does not have the authority to recognize either a state or government.⁸

On the other hand, many analysts agree that U.N. membership is an acknowledgement by U.N. members that an entity has satisfied the requirements of statehood. It provides governments with legitimacy, not only internationally, but also domestically. For many countries, membership in the United Nations provides an equal voice in U.N. bodies like the General Assembly, an international platform to advocate and pursue national and foreign policy objectives, and the opportunity to receive or provide technical or development assistance through multilateral mechanisms. Consequently, obtaining U.N. membership is often a priority for new countries, territories, organizations, or entities (hereinafter referred to as “entities” for the purpose of this report) aiming to obtain statehood.⁹

⁷ *The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States*. The Convention’s definition of statehood is widely cited by international law experts. The treaty was adopted at the International Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay on December 26, 1933. The United States ratified the Convention on June 29, 1934. For further discussion of statehood issues, see Thomas D. Grant, “Defining Statehood: The Montevideo Convention and its Discontents,” *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, vol. 37 (1998), pp. 403-453. Also see, James R. Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁸ United Nations website, “About U.N. Membership,” at <http://www.un.org/en/members/about.shtml>.

⁹ Connie L. McNeely, *Constructing the Nation State - International Organization and Prescriptive Action* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995).

Paths to U.N. Membership: Criteria and Process

The circumstances under which a state obtains U.N. membership can vary. The original 51 members of the organization include many of the Allied nations of World War II that had either signed the United Nations Declaration in 1942, or participated in the founding United Nations Conference in San Francisco in 1945. The remaining 142 members were accepted for membership under the criteria and processes outlined in the Charter and the Rules of Procedure for both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Examples of circumstances under which these states obtained U.N. membership are described below, and in some cases may overlap.¹⁰

- Some members, sometimes referred to as **existing states**, were not among the original 51 U.N. members; they were, however, subsequently admitted to the organization. Examples include Barbados, Brazil, Italy, Japan, Tunisia, and Nigeria.
- Other members are or were **divided states**. Such states, which were divided because of the East-West conflict, have generally obtained U.N. membership after the claims of various sides had been determined in favor of either division or reunification.¹¹ Examples include the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic (now Germany), North and South Korea, and the Republic of Vietnam and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now Vietnam).
- Some members have been admitted after the **secession or partition of a state** that was already a U.N. member. In such cases, the seceding entity reapplied for membership. Examples include the partitions of Pakistan and India and Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the admission of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as new U.N. members after the breakup of the Soviet Union.
- In some cases, **two existing member states have merged**. In practice, the process for admitting such members has been flexible; the newly merged states did not have to reapply for membership. Examples include East and West Germany (Germany) and the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (Yemen).
- One state, Indonesia, **withdrew and re-entered** the United Nations in the mid-1960s. The General Assembly and Security Council treated the withdrawal as if it were a "temporary 'inactive' membership" that ended cooperation with the organization, rather than the country's membership. The Assembly and Council provided a standing invitation for Indonesia to "reactivate" its membership at any time. Indonesia eventually rejoined the organization without reapplying for admission.¹²

¹⁰ Parts of this section are drawn from *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, ed. Bruno Simma et al., 3rd ed., vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp. 185-187 (hereinafter referred to by its title). For additional reading, see Thomas D. Grant, *Admission to the United Nations: Charter Article 4 and the Rise of Universal Organization* (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009); and John Dugard, *Recognition and the United Nations* (Cambridge: Grotius Publishing, 1987).

¹¹ *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, p. 185.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Criteria

The criteria for U.N. membership are outlined in Article 4 of the U.N. Charter (see **text box**), and can be divided into four key elements. First, an applicant must be a state. An entity applying for U.N. membership must meet the requirements of statehood under international law (a defined territory, a permanent population, and independent governance), be recognized by other states, and have the capacity to conduct diplomacy with other countries.¹³

Second, an applicant must be “peace-loving.” This criterion has been used to evaluate an applicant’s past and current conduct. The concept of a “peace-loving” state in many ways reflects the United Nations’ purpose of maintaining international peace and security.¹⁴

Third, an applicant must declare that it accepts obligations contained in the U.N. Charter by (1) consenting to be bound by the U.N. Charter, a legally binding international treaty; and (2) attaching a formal declaration to its U.N. membership application.¹⁵

Fourth, an applicant must be willing and able to carry out U.N. Charter obligations. U.N. members have identified several indicators to consider when evaluating this criteria application: including the maintenance of friendly relations with other states; the fulfillment of international obligations; and the use of peaceful dispute settlement under international law.¹⁶

U.N. Charter: Article 4

1. Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.*

2. The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

* The reference to “All other peace-loving states,” refers to those states applying for membership after the 51 original members of the United Nations.

Process

The Security Council and General Assembly are the primary bodies that consider U.N. membership applications under Article 4 of the U.N. Charter. The rules of procedure for both the Security Council and the General Assembly set forth the details of this process. Applications for membership are submitted by the requesting state to the U.N. Secretary-General, who then forwards them to the Assembly and the Council. The amount of time it takes for an application to move through the process varies. In some cases, membership may be granted within weeks or months, while in other cases an application may remain pending indefinitely.

Role of the Security Council

When applying for U.N. membership, an applicant states that “it accepts the obligations contained in the Charter,” in accordance with Rules 58 through 60 of the *Provisional Rules of Procedure of*

¹³ *The Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States*, December 26, 1933.

¹⁴ Article 1, paragraph 1, of the U.N. Charter states that the purpose of the United Nations is to, among other things, “maintain international peace and security.”

¹⁵ The declaration would include the principles set forth in Article 2 of the Charter that the obligation to settle international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

¹⁶ These indicators are drawn from *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, pp. 346-350.

the Security Council. The Council President, in most instances, refers the application to the Council Committee on the Admission of New Members for its consideration.¹⁷ The Council Committee then completes its review and submits a report, with recommended resolution language, to the Council. In a formal meeting, the Council considers the application.

Decisions on membership applications may be vetoed by any of the P-5. If the Council, however, decides to recommend the application for admission, it adopts a resolution of recommendation that is forwarded to the General Assembly, with a complete record of the discussion.¹⁸ The Council, in recent years, has also issued a presidential statement on its action. If the Council does not recommend membership, “it shall submit a special report to the General Assembly” with a complete record of the discussion.¹⁹

Role of the General Assembly

Rule 136 of the *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly* states that if the Security Council recommends the applicant state for membership, the General Assembly shall consider whether the applicant is “a peace-loving State” and is “able and willing” to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter. The Assembly decides, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, on the state’s application for membership. Membership becomes effective on the date on which the General Assembly adopts the resolution on admission.²⁰

International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion: Role of the General Assembly Absent a Security Council Recommendation

Since the establishment of the United Nations, many governments and experts have questioned whether the General Assembly can admit a state into the United Nations without a prior Security Council resolution recommending admission. The issue became particularly pressing between 1946 and 1949, when the Security Council was unable to recommend admission for a number of states because the then-Soviet Union exercised its veto in 23 votes on membership involving at least nine states. The General Assembly sought to address the situation in 1949, when it requested the International Court of Justice (ICJ) or World Court to provide an advisory opinion on the issue.²¹ In 1950, the Court ruled, by a vote of 12 to 2, that the General Assembly could not circumvent the requirement for a Security Council recommendation.²²

If the Security Council has not recommended an application for membership or postpones its consideration, then General Assembly Rule 137 provides that the Assembly may, after full consideration of the special report of the Security Council, send the application back to the

¹⁷ In accordance with Rule 59 of the *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council*, “Unless the Security Council decides otherwise, the application shall be referred by the President to a committee of the Security Council upon which each member of the Security Council shall be represented. The committee shall examine any application referred to it and report its conclusions thereon to the Council not less than thirty-five days in advance of a regular session of the General Assembly or, if a special session of the General Assembly is called, not less than fourteen days in advance of such session.”

¹⁸ Rule 60 of the *Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Rule 138 of the *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly*.

²¹ U.N. General Assembly Resolution 296 J (IV), November 22, 1949.

²² International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, Competence of the General Assembly for the Admission of a State to the United Nations (1950). For more information, see *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1950* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1951), pp. 409-413.

Council, along with a full record of the discussion in the Assembly, for further consideration and recommendation.

Suspension or Loss of Membership

The U.N. Charter outlines the process and criteria for suspension and loss of membership. Both actions require approval from the Security Council and the General Assembly, making them intentionally difficult to implement. Suspension is specifically addressed in Article 5, which states that U.N. members against which preventative or enforcement action has been taken by the Security Council may be suspended from the “exercise of rights and privileges” of membership. Suspension is generally not permanent; a state that is suspended remains a member and continues to be bound by obligations under the U.N. Charter.²³ Suspension requires a two-thirds majority decision by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of nine Security Council members, including the P-5. The Security Council decides whether to restore the rights and privileges of membership, also by a vote of nine in favor, including members of the P-5.²⁴ To date, no state has been suspended.

Loss of membership is addressed in Article 6 of the Charter. A member that has “persistently violated” the principles of the U.N. Charter may be expelled from the organization by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. The expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds majority decision by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of nine Security Council members, including the P-5. Loss of membership is permanent; a member expelled under Article 6 is no longer bound under the obligations of the Charter. No member has been expelled to date.

Instead of suspending or removing a state, members have exercised alternative measures, including

- enforcement powers under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression;
- application of Article 19 of the Charter, which states that a U.N. member that is in financial arrears shall have no vote in the General Assembly,²⁵ and
- rejection of a member state’s credentials in the General Assembly.²⁶

²³ For further discussion of Article 5, see *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, pp. 365-373.

²⁴ Under Article 27 of the U.N. Charter, non-procedural decisions by Security Council members shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members, including the P-5.

²⁵ Article 19 addresses financial arrears. It states, “A member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.”

²⁶ The General Assembly’s Credentials Committee examines and accepts the credentials of delegations to the Assembly, ensuring that they have been signed by either Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the member state. In this way, credentials of the majority of U.N. members have been routinely accepted for participation in each General Assembly session since it first convened in 1946. However, some credentials have been challenged—usually to change the political status of the government involved or to promote the foreign policies of the challenging country. For more information, see U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Credentials Considerations in the United Nations General Assembly: The Process and Its Role*, committee print, prepared by (continued...)

U.N. Non-member Observer States

Over time, U.N. members have developed the practice of inviting entities and “non-member states” to observe the work of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly.²⁷ This practice is not outlined in the U.N. Charter; rather, it has evolved in practice over many years, originating with Switzerland’s application for permanent observer status in 1946. Many states that were once U.N. observers, such as Austria, Bangladesh, Japan, Switzerland, and Vietnam, eventually applied for and obtained U.N. membership. There are currently two non-member observer states: the Holy See (Vatican), which gained permanent observer status in 1964; and “Palestine,” which gained observer “entity” status in 1964, and observer “non-member state” status in 2012.

Membership in U.N. Specialized Agencies

The process and criteria for membership in U.N. specialized agencies vary depending on the organization. There are currently 15 specialized agencies in the U.N. system (see **text box**). Each of these entities is a legally independent intergovernmental organization with its own constitution, rules, membership, organs, and financial resources.²⁹

The United States is a member of all specialized agencies except for two—UNIDO and UNWTO. The membership requirements set forth in the constitutions of these agencies show a range of membership processes, summarized below (also see the **Appendix**).

- In 11 specialized agencies, membership in the United Nations gives a state access to membership in the agency without having to have its admission approved by the membership of the agency (ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMO, ITU, UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, and UNESCO).
- Of these 11 agencies, three also provide membership, without a vote, to member nations of any specialized agency (IFAD, UNIDO, and WIPO).

U.N. Specialized Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)²⁸
 International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
 International Labor Organization (ILO)
 International Maritime Organization (IMO)
 International Monetary Fund (IMF)
 International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
 International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
 U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
 U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
 U.N. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
 Universal Postal Union (UPU)
 World Bank Group (WBG)
 World Health Organization (WHO)
 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
 World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

(...continued)

Congressional Research Service, 98th Cong., 1st sess., December 1983, S. Prt. 98-143 (Washington: GPO, 1983), and “Credentials Committee,” at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/credentials/credentials.shtml>.

²⁷ International organizations and institutions may also be invited to observe the work of the General Assembly. For a full list of these observers, see <http://www.un.org/en/members/intergovorg.shtml>.

²⁸ According to the United Nations, the IAEA is not a specialized agency in the strict legal sense; however, for all intents and purposes it operates like one. It reports to the General Assembly and, when appropriate, to the Security Council. Like U.N. specialized agencies, it also reports to the U.N. Economic and Social Council. See *The U.N. System* on the U.N. Chief Executive Board’s website, at <http://www.unsceb.org/content/un-system>.

²⁹ Each organization has a “specialized agency” arrangement or agreement with the United Nations under Article 57 of the U.N. Charter, and reports to the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

- Two agencies require some process of voting for admission (FAO and UNWTO).
 - UNWTO requires a two-thirds vote of its General Assembly for membership—however, an amendment to Article 5 of its statute, adopted in 2005 but not yet in force, would have membership open to all states that are U.N. members.
- The two international financial institutions—the World Bank Group and the IMF—have different membership processes.
 - Each member of the IMF is assigned a quota “based broadly on its relative position in the world economy,” which determines its maximum financial commitment to the IMF, voting power, and access to IMF financing.³⁰ In order to admit new IMF members, the overall quota must be changed. (Because the United States currently controls 16.75 percent of IMF votes, it can block the admission of any new members.)
 - To be a member of the World Bank Group, entities must also be members of the IMF. Specifically, IMF membership is required to join the Group’s International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, the Bank’s non-concessional lending facility). In turn, IBRD membership is required for admission to other parts of the Group, including the International Development Association (the Bank’s concessional lending facility) and the International Finance Corporation (which lends to private sector entities in development countries), among others.

Some specialized agencies allow for “associate membership.” Generally, an associate member is defined as a territory or group of territories that are not responsible for the conduct of its international relations. The criteria and activities related to this type of membership vary depending on the organization and are often outlined in specialized agency constitutions, statutes, or rules of procedure.³¹ Examples of specialized agencies that grant associate membership include FAO, UNESCO, and WHO.

Palestinian Membership Efforts³²

Palestine’s change in observer status and its efforts to apply for U.N. membership have garnered significant domestic and international attention. These events are part of a broader, ongoing initiative by Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to obtain membership or non-member observer state status in various

³⁰ “IFM Quotas Fact Sheet,” International Monetary Fund, March 25, 2014, at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/quotas.htm>.

³¹ For example, Article 8 of the WHO’s constitution states, “Territories or groups of territories which are not responsible for the conduct of their international relations may be admitted as Associate Members by the Health Assembly upon application made on behalf of such territory or group of territories by the Member or other authority having responsibility for their international relations.” Puerto Rico and Tokelau are associate members of the WHO.

³² This section focuses on the process and status of Palestinian membership efforts in the context of the United Nations and U.N. system. For information on Palestinian, U.S., and regional perspectives on this issue, see CRS Report RL34074, *The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations*, by (name redacted). A more detailed analysis of UNESCO is available in CRS Report R42999, *The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

U.N. and related bodies as a means to achieving more widespread recognition of Palestinian statehood. Brief descriptions of these efforts follow.

- **Application for U.N. Membership.** In September 2011, Palestine submitted an application for membership to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The Secretary-General subsequently submitted it to the Security Council for consideration. The Council’s Committee on the Admission of New Members stated that it was “unable to make a unanimous recommendation to the Security Council” regarding Palestine’s application.³³ The application remains pending and is unlikely to be considered by the Council. The Obama Administration has stated that the United States would veto any proposed Security Council resolution recommending Palestinian membership.
- **Change in U.N. Observer Status.** In November 2012, the U.N. General Assembly voted to change Palestine’s observer status from “entity” to “non-member state.”³⁴ Palestine’s previous relationship with the United Nations, as defined through a series of General Assembly resolutions, was as an observer “entity.” As a permanent non-member observer state, Palestine has maintained many of the capacities it had as an entity.³⁵ Although Palestine has the term “state” in its current designation, it is not a U.N. member. As a non-member state, Palestine does not have the right to vote, call for a vote, or put forward candidates in the General Assembly.³⁶
- **UNESCO Membership.** In October 2011, the UNESCO General Conference—the organization’s main decision-making body—adopted a resolution admitting Palestine as a member. The General Conference agreed to Palestinian membership by a vote of 107 in favor, 14 against (including the United States), and 52 abstaining.
- **Accession to Multilateral Treaties.** In April 2014, the Palestinians submitted 13 letters of accession to the United Nations and two to the governments of Switzerland and Norway for a range of international convention and treaties.³⁷ Accession is proceeding in accordance with the specific provisions set forth in each treaty.

³³ See U.N. document, S/2011/705, November 11, 2011. For more information on Council process, see “Role of the Security Council” section.

³⁴ U.N. document, A/RES/67/19, adopted November 29, 2012.

³⁵ These include participation in General Assembly debates, the right of reply, the right to raise points of order, the ability to co-sponsor draft resolutions and decisions related to proceedings on Palestinian and Middle East issues, and the right to maintain permanent offices at U.N. headquarters.

³⁶ However, in November 2013, the “State of Palestine” participated in the balloting for a judge for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Article 13, Section 2(d) of the Statute for the Tribunal (Annex to U.N. Doc. S/25704, adopted pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 827 (1993), as subsequently amended) includes “non-Member States maintaining permanent observer missions at United Nations Headquarters” in the election of the tribunal’s judges.

³⁷ For more information, see PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, “Q&A: Palestine’s Accession to International Treaties,” April 2, 2014, at <http://nad-plo.org/userfiles/file/fact%20sheets/Q&A%20Accession.pdf>.

Palestine, the United Nations, and the International Criminal Court³⁸

Some analysts have raised questions regarding the possible impact of Palestinian membership in the United Nations on the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC; the “Court”). Under the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the ICC, only a state may submit itself to the jurisdiction of the Court. A state that is not a party to the Statute may nevertheless make an ad hoc declaration to submit its nationals or territory to the jurisdiction of the Court for a situation in which possible war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide might have occurred.³⁹

During the December 2008-January 2009 conflict in the Gaza Strip, Israeli armed forces conducted military operations in the Gaza Strip and hostilities took place between Israeli and Palestinian forces. In the wake of the conflict, the Palestinian Authority (PA) justice minister in January 2009 submitted an ad hoc declaration to the ICC on behalf of the “Government of Palestine” asking the Court to exercise jurisdiction over “the territory of Palestine” regarding “acts” committed since July 1, 2002.⁴⁰ The ICC’s Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) opened a preliminary examination in order to determine whether an investigation would proceed, including whether preconditions for the exercise of ICC jurisdiction existed.

In April 2012, the OTP issued an opinion stating that it could not exercise jurisdiction over the territory of Palestine, because it could not make the determination of whether the PA’s declaration was on behalf of a state, given continued controversy surrounding the issue. The OTP stated that it could in the future consider allegations of crimes committed in Palestine if the U.N. Security Council or U.N. General Assembly took action on the issue of the statehood of Palestine, or if the Security Council made a referral to the ICC of the situation in Palestine. According to the OTP, the ICC’s Assembly of States Parties (ASP) could also consider the matter.⁴¹

In November 2012, the General Assembly adopted a resolution according Palestine “non-member observer State status in the United Nations....” In a November 2013 report, the OTP stated that this resolution did not make the 2009 PA ad hoc declaration valid for purposes of ICC jurisdiction, and that the OTP could not open a new preliminary examination of the situation. The OTP explained, however, that the status of Palestine as a non-member observer state in the General Assembly “is of direct relevance to the issue of the Court’s jurisdiction.” Since the General Assembly’s resolution, no representative of Palestine has lodged a new ad hoc declaration accepting the ICC’s jurisdiction over the situation in Palestine.⁴² This raises the question of whether a new Palestinian declaration either seeking to accede to the Rome Statute or recognizing the ICC’s jurisdiction over territory referred to as Palestinian might be accepted in light of the change in Palestine’s U.N. observer status in November 2012. Since the General Assembly’s resolution, no such declaration has been made.

U.S. Policy

As one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United States can play a key role in determining membership in the United Nations. It has a more limited role in determining membership in U.N. specialized agencies. A decision to admit a new member in these bodies is generally made by the entire membership, where each member—including the United States—has one vote. The decision to vote for or against membership in both the United Nations and its specialized agencies lies primarily with the executive branch of the U.S. government, which represents the United States in the United Nations and related agencies.

³⁸ This section was written by (name redacted), CRS Analyst in Foreign Policy Legislation.

³⁹ Article 12(3).

⁴⁰ Based on the date of entry into force of the Rome Statute, the ICC can only exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed on or after July 1, 2002.

⁴¹ The Assembly of States Parties (ASP) is made up of representatives of the parties to the Rome Statute and carries out oversight and certain administrative functions.

⁴² International Criminal Court, Office of the Prosecutor, *Report on Preliminary Examination Activities, 2013*, November 2013, pp. 53-54.

Some Members of Congress, however, have sought to influence U.S. policy on the issue by proposing legislation advocating or opposing the membership of various countries and entities—including Israel, Montenegro, Kosovo, South Africa, China/Taiwan, and the PLO. Some Members have also introduced legislation calling on the United Nations to suspend the membership of any country that does not meet certain criteria.⁴³ Notably, in the mid-1990s, Congress enacted two laws to prohibit funding to the United Nations or its affiliated organizations under specific conditions related to internationally recognized attributes of statehood or PLO membership in the United Nations:

- **Section 410 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995** (P.L. 103-236) states that the United States shall not make contributions to “any affiliated organization of the United Nations which grants full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood”; and
- **Section 414 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991** (P.L. 101-246) states, “No funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or any other Act shall be available for the United Nations or any specialized agencies thereof which accords the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states.”⁴⁴

The United States currently withholds its voluntary and assessed contributions to UNESCO in response to the 2011 decision by UNESCO members to admit Palestine as a member.⁴⁵ In FY2013 through FY2015, the President asked Congress to provide authority to waive the above-mentioned legislative restrictions; however, many Members of Congress appear unwilling to do so.⁴⁶ The Obama Administration has stated that the United States does not intend to withdraw from UNESCO despite the funding restrictions. In November 2013, the United States lost its voting rights in the UNESCO General Conference as a result of its withholding of assessed contributions.⁴⁷

The 113th Congress has addressed U.N. membership primarily in the context of specific countries—with a particular focus on Palestinian membership efforts. For example, the FY2014 foreign operations appropriations bill (Division K of P.L. 113-76) prohibits U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority if the Palestinians obtain membership in the United Nations or U.N. specialized agencies outside of an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians. The Secretary of State may waive these restrictions if he certifies to the appropriations committees that doing so is in the national security interests of the United States. In addition, some Members

⁴³ See, for instance, H.Con.Res. 293 [107th], “Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United Nations should suspend the membership of any state identified as a sponsor of terrorism by the Department of State.”

⁴⁴ Section 8 of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945 (P.L. 79-264; 22 U.S.C. 287e), authorizes appropriations to the Department of State for U.S. participation in the United Nations.

⁴⁵ Current withholdings are approximately \$80 million over three fiscal years (FY2012 through FY2014), or 22% of the UNESCO regular budget.

⁴⁶ See, for instance, Transcript, Hearing on President Obama’s Proposed Fiscal 2015 Budget Request for the State Department before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 13, 2014.

⁴⁷ The United States opposed UNESCO member states’ decision to admit Palestine as a member—arguing that Palestinian statehood can only be realized through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and not through membership in international organizations. For more information on Palestinian membership in UNESCO and U.S. policy, see CRS Report R42999, *The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

have introduced legislation seeking to further tie U.S. funding of the United Nations to Palestinian membership decisions,⁴⁸ and expressing support for Taiwan's participation and membership in the United Nations.⁴⁹

Issues for Congress

As the 113th Congress considers issues related to membership in the United Nations and its specialized agencies, Members may take several policy issues and related questions into account.

Impact on Membership in Other U.N. Entities

U.S. decisions on membership in one U.N. entity can potentially affect membership in related U.N. entities. For instance, as discussed previously, states that are admitted as members of the United Nations are eligible for membership, without a vote, in 11 specialized agencies. Three of these specialized agencies—IFAD, UNIDO, and WIPO—offer membership, also without a vote, to members of any other specialized agency.

A newly admitted member of the United Nations, IFAD, UNIDO, or WIPO that wishes to obtain membership in specialized agencies must provide appropriate notification. The type and extent of such notifications vary depending on the organization.

U.S. Contributions to U.N. System Entities

Based on existing restrictions in U.S. law, Palestinian membership in U.N. bodies could have implications for U.S. contributions to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. When Palestine was admitted to UNESCO in October 2011, for example, it also became eligible for membership, without a vote, in IFAD, UNIDO, and WIPO. To date, the Palestinians have not pursued membership at these organizations; however, if they were to do so, they would likely receive an invitation for membership. The United States is a member of IFAD and WIPO, and is not a member of UNIDO. It is unclear whether the United States would withhold funding to these organizations as it has done in the case of UNESCO.

Role of Politics in Membership Criteria and Process

Experts and observers generally agree that individual U.N. members' response to the criteria for U.N. membership and decision to admit a state are inherently political. The extent to which the

⁴⁸ See, for example, H.R. 1337, Palestinian Accountability Act, introduced on March 21, 2013, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs (HFAC); and Title III of S. 1313, The United Nations, Transparency, Accountability and Reform Act of 2013, introduced on September 19, 2013 and referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (also see Title IV of the House version of this bill, H.R. 3155).

⁴⁹ Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations; however, it has sought to participate or obtain membership in various U.N.-related bodies. For more information, see CRS Report R41952, *U.S.-Taiwan Relationship: Overview of Policy Issues*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted). Regarding legislation, see, H.R. 419, Taiwan Policy Act of 2013, introduced January 25, 2013, and referred to HFAC; and H.Con.Res. 55, Expressing the Sense of Congress that Taiwan and its 23,000,000 people deserve membership in the United Nations, introduced on September 16, 2013 and referred to HFAC.

criteria have been applied to various membership applications has depended on the applicant country or entity, geopolitical issues at the time, and individual member states' national interests and views on the role and nature of the United Nations. In particular, the complex relationships among member states play an important role in membership decisions. These relationships are independent of the United Nations, but can impact whether an entity or state applies for membership, if an application is considered by the Security Council and General Assembly and, ultimately, whether an entity is invited to be a member of the organization.

Looking Ahead: Key Questions

In light of the aforementioned issues, Members of Congress may face several questions related to U.N. and specialized agency membership, including

- whether to support or oppose the efforts of various entities to pursue membership in the United Nations or its specialized agencies;
- what specific steps Members might take to support or oppose the membership of various entities, including, but not limited to, those that represent the Palestinians; and
- how, if at all, to address the Obama Administration's continued requests to support legislation that would provide authority to waive the legislative restrictions that prohibit U.S. funding for UNESCO.

The extent to which Members might address these issues depends on a range of factors—including whether the Palestinians pursue membership in other U.N. entities and how such efforts might take place within the context of overall Israeli-Palestinian relations; as well as other domestic and foreign policy priorities.

Appendix. Membership-Related Provisions for U.N. Specialized Agencies

The table below provides relevant membership provisions for U.N. specialized agencies and one related organization. It draws from various agency constitutions, conventions, or statutes that address (1) the process and/or criteria for membership, (2) withdrawal from the organization, and (3) the impact of arrears.

Table A-1. Provisions Addressing Membership in U.N. Specialized Agencies and One Related Organization

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article II. 2. The Conference may by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization is present, decide to admit as an additional Member ... any nation which has submitted an application for membership and a declaration made in a formal instrument that it will accept the obligations of the Constitution as in force at the time of admission.</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article III. 4. A. A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a Member Nation to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member Nation.</p> <p>Article XIX. Any Member Nation may give notice of withdrawal from the Organization at any time after the expiration of four years from the date of its acceptance of this Constitution. ...Such notice shall take effect one year after the date of its communication to the Director-General. The financial obligation to the Organization of a Member Nation which has given notice of withdrawal ...shall include the entire calendar year in which the notice takes effect.</p>
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)*	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 92. (a) This Convention shall be open for adherence by members of the United Nations and States associated with them, ... (b) Adherence shall be effected by a notification addressed to the Government of the United States of America and shall take effect as from the thirtieth day from the receipt of the notification by the Government of the United States..., which shall notify all the contracting States.</p> <p>Article 93. States other than those provided for in Articles 91 and 92 (a) may, subject to approval by any general international organization set up by the nations of the world to preserve peace, be admitted to participation in this Convention by means of a four-fifths vote of the Assembly and on such conditions as the Assembly may prescribe....</p>	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 62. The Assembly may suspend the voting power in the Assembly and in the Council of any contracting State that fails to discharge within a reasonable period its financial obligations to the Organization.</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
<p>International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*</p>	<p><i>Agreement</i></p> <p>Article 3. Section 1. (a) Membership of the Fund shall be open to any State member of the United Nations or of any of its specialized agencies, or of the International Atomic Energy Agency.</p> <p>Section 2. (b) Non-original Members of the Fund shall be those other States that, after approval of their membership by the Governing Council, become parties to this Agreement in accordance with Section 1 (c) of Article 13.</p> <p>(Article 13. Section 1 (c). States listed in Schedule I that have not become parties to this Agreement within one year after its entry into force and States that are not so listed, may, after approval of their membership by the Governing Council, become parties by depositing an instrument of accession.)</p>	<p><i>Agreement</i></p> <p>Article 9. Section 1. Withdrawal. (a) Except as provided in Section 4 (a) of this Article, a Member may withdraw from the Fund by depositing an instrument of denunciation of this Agreement with the Depository.</p> <p>(b) Withdrawal of a Member shall take effect on the date specified in its instrument of denunciation, but in no event less than six months after deposit of such instrument.</p> <p>Section 2. Suspension of Membership. (a) If a Member fails to fulfil any of its obligations to the Fund, the Governing Council may, by a three-fourths majority of the total number of votes, suspend its membership. The Member so suspended shall automatically cease to be a Member one year from the date of its suspension, unless the Council decides by the same majority of the total number of votes to restore the Member to good standing.</p>
<p>International Labor Organization (ILO)*</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 1. 3. Any original member of the United Nations and any State admitted to membership of the United Nations by a decision of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Charter may become a Member of the International Labor Organization by communicating to the Director-General of the International Labor Office its formal acceptance of the obligations of the Constitution of the International Labor Organization.</p> <p>Article 1. 4. The General Conference of the International Labor Organization may also admit Members to the Organization by a vote concurred in by two-thirds of the delegates attending the session, including two-thirds of the Government delegates present and voting. Such admission shall take effect on the communication to the Director-General of the International Labor Office by the government of the new Member of its formal acceptance of the obligations</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 13. 4. A Member of the Organization which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference, in the Governing Body, in any committee, or in the elections of members of the Governing Body, if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years: Provided that the Conference may by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the delegates present permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.</p> <p>Article 1. 5. No Member of the International Labor Organization may withdraw from the Organization without giving notice of its intention so to do to the Director-General of the International Labor Office. Such notice shall take effect two years after the date of its reception by the Director-General, subject to the</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
	of the Constitution of the Organization.	Member having at that time fulfilled all financial obligations arising out of its membership. When a Member has ratified any international labor Convention, such withdrawal shall not affect the continued validity for the period provided for in the Convention of all obligations arising thereunder or relating thereto.
International Maritime Organization (IMO)*	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 5. Membership in the Organization is open to all States, subject to the provisions of Part III.</p> <p>Article 6. Members of the United Nations may become Members of the Organization by becoming parties to the Convention in accordance with the provisions of Article 57.</p> <p>Article 8. Any States not entitled to become a Member under Article 6 or 7 may apply through the Secretary-General of the Organization to become a Member and shall be admitted as a Member upon its becoming a party to the Convention in accordance with the provisions of Article 57 provided that, upon the recommendation of the Council, its application has been approved by two-thirds of the Members other than Associate Members.</p> <p>Article 57. Subject to the provisions of Part III [on Membership] the present Convention shall remain open for signature or acceptance and States may become parties to the Convention by: (a) Signature without reservation as to acceptance; (b) Signature subject to acceptance followed by acceptance; or (c) Acceptance. Acceptance shall be affected by the deposit of an instrument with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.</p>	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 59. (a) Any Member may withdraw from the Organization by written notification given to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who will immediately inform the other Members and the Secretary-General of the Organization of such notification. Notification of withdrawal may be given at any time after the expiration of twelve months from the date on which the Convention has come into force. The withdrawal shall take effect upon the expiration of twelve months from the date on which such written notification is received by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.</p> <p>Article 42. Any Member which fails to discharge its financial obligation to the Organization within one year from the date on which it is due, shall have no vote in the Assembly, the Council, or the Maritime Safety Committee unless the Assembly, at its discretion, waives this provision.</p>
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 2. It [ITU] shall ... be composed of (b) any other State, a Member of the United Nations, which accedes to this Constitution and the Convention in accordance with Article 53 of this Constitution; (c) any other State, not a Member of the United Nations,</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 28. A Member State which is in arrears in its payments to the Union shall lose its right to vote as defined in Nos. 27 and 28 of this Constitution for so long as the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contribution due for the two preceding</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
	<p>which applies for membership of the Union and which, after having secured approval of such application by two-thirds of the Member States of the Union, accedes to this Constitution and the Convention in accordance with Article 53 of this Constitution.</p>	<p>years.</p> <p>Article 57. 1. Each Member State which has ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to this Constitution and the Convention shall have the right to denounce them. In such a case, this Constitution and the Convention shall be denounced simultaneously in one single instrument, by a notification addressed to the Secretary-General. Upon receipt of such notification, the Secretary-General shall advise the other Member States thereof. 2. Such denunciation shall take effect at the expiration of a period of one year from the date of receipt of its notification by the Secretary-General.</p>
<p>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 2. 1. Membership of the United Nations Organization shall carry with it the right to membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; 2. Subject to the conditions of the Agreement between this Organization and the United Nations Organization, approved pursuant to Article X of this Constitution, states not members of the United Nations Organization may be admitted to membership of the Organization, upon recommendation of the Executive Board, by a two-thirds majority vote of the General Conference.</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 2. 4. Members of the Organization which are suspended from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership of the United Nations Organization shall, upon the request of the latter, be suspended from the rights and privileges of this Organization; 5. Members of the Organization which are expelled from the United Nations Organization shall automatically cease to be Members of this Organization; 6. Any Member State or Associate Member of the Organization may withdraw from the Organization by notice addressed to the Director-General. Such notice shall take effect on 31 December of the year following that during which the notice was given. No such withdrawal shall affect the financial obligations owed to the Organization on the date the withdrawal takes effect. Notice of withdrawal by an Associate Member shall be given on its behalf by the Member State or other authority having responsibility for its international relations.</p>
<p>United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 3. (a) States members of the United Nations or of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency may become Members of the Organization by becoming parties to this Constitution in accordance with Article 24 and paragraph 2 of</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 5. Suspension. 1. Any Member of the Organization that is suspended from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership of the United Nations shall automatically be suspended from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership of</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
	<p>Article 25; (b) States other than those referred to in subparagraph (a) may become Members of the Organization by becoming parties to this Constitution in accordance with paragraphs of Article 24 and subparagraph 2 (c) of Article 25, after their membership has been approved by the Conference, by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting, upon the recommendation of the Board.</p>	<p>the Organization.</p> <p>Article 6. Withdrawal. 2. Any Member that is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the Organization if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the assessed contributions due from it for the preceding two fiscal years. Any organ may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote in that organ if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.</p>
<p>Universal Postal Union (UPU)*</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 11. 1. Any member of the United Nations may accede to the Union; 2. Any sovereign country which is not a member of the United Nations may apply for admission as a member country of the Union; 3. Accession or application for admission to the Union must entail a formal declaration of accession to the Constitution and to the obligatory Acts of the Union. It shall be addressed by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau, who shall notify the accession or consult the member countries on the application for admission, as the case may be; 4. A country which is not a member of the United Nations shall be deemed to be admitted as a member country if its application is approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union.</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 12. 1. Each member country may withdraw from the Union by notice of denunciation of the Constitution given by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau and by him to the governments of member countries; 2. Withdrawal from the Union shall become effective one year after the day on which the notice of denunciation provided for in paragraph 1 is received by the Director General of the International Bureau.</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
World Health Organization (WHO)*	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 4. Members of the United Nations may become Members of the Organization by signing or otherwise accepting this Constitution in accordance with the provisions of Chapter XIX and in accordance with their constitutional processes.</p> <p>Article 6. Subject to the conditions of any agreement between the United Nations and the Organization, approved pursuant to Chapter XVI, States which do not become Members in accordance with Articles 4 and 5 may apply to become Members and shall be admitted as Members when their application has been approved by a simple majority vote of the Health Assembly.</p>	<p><i>Constitution</i></p> <p>Article 7. If a Member fails to meet its financial obligations to the Organization or in other exceptional circumstances, the Health Assembly may, on such conditions as it thinks proper, suspend the voting privileges and services to which a Member is entitled. The Health Assembly shall have the authority to restore such voting privileges and services.</p>
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)*	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 5. (1) Membership in the Organization shall be open to any State which is a member of any of the Unions as defined in Article 2(vii). (2) Membership in the Organization shall be equally open to any State not a member of any of the Unions, provided that: (i) it is a member of the United Nations, any of the Specialized Agencies brought into relationship with the United Nations, or the International Atomic Energy Agency, or is a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice, or it is invited by the General Assembly to become a party to this Convention.</p>	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 11. 5. Any State party to this [WIPO] Convention not member of any of the Unions which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions under the present Article, and any State party to this Convention member of any of the Unions which is in arrears in the payment of its contributions to any of the Unions, shall have no vote in any of the bodies of the Organization of which it is a member, if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. However, any of these bodies may allow such a State to continue to exercise its vote in that body if, and as long as, it is satisfied that the delay in payment arises from exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.</p>
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)*	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 3. The following may become Members of the Organization by the procedure set forth in the present Convention ... (b) Any Member of the United Nations having a meteorological service by acceding to the present Convention in accordance with Article 33; (c) Any State, fully responsible for the conduct of its international relations and having a meteorological service, not listed in Annex I of the present Convention</p>	<p><i>Convention</i></p> <p>Article 30. (a) Any Member may withdraw from the Organization on twelve months' notice in writing given by it to the Secretary General of the Organization, who shall at once inform all the Members of the Organization of such notice of withdrawal; (b) Any Member of the Organization not responsible for its own international relations may be withdrawn from the Organization on twelve months' notice in writing given</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
	<p>and not a Member of the United Nations, after the submission of a request for membership to the Secretariat of the Organization and after its approval by two-thirds of the Members of the Organization as specified in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this Article by acceding to the present Convention...</p>	<p>by the Member or other authority responsible for its international relations to the Secretary General of the Organization, who shall at once inform all the Members of the Organization of such notice of withdrawal.</p> <p>Article 31. If any Member fails to meet its financial obligations to the Organization or otherwise fails in its obligations under the present Convention, the Congress may by resolution suspend it from exercising its rights and enjoying privileges as a Member of the Organization until it has met such financial or other obligations.</p>
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)	<p><i>Statute</i></p> <p>Article 5. Full membership of the Organization shall be open to all sovereign States ... 3. Other States may become Full Members of the Organization if their candidatures are approved by the General Assembly by a majority of two-thirds of the Full Members present and voting provided that said majority is a majority of the Full Members of the Organization.</p>	<p><i>Statute</i></p> <p>Article 35. 1. Any Full Member may withdraw from the Organization on the expiry of one year's notice in writing to the Depositary Government.</p> <p>Annex. 13. A Member which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization's expenditure shall be deprived of the privileges enjoyed by the Members in the form of services and the right to vote in the Assembly and the Council if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two financial years. At the request of the Council, the Assembly may, however, permit such a Member to vote and to enjoy the services of the Organization if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.</p>
International Monetary Fund (IMF)*	<p><i>Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article II. Membership shall be open to other countries at such times and in accordance with such terms as may be prescribed by the Board of Governors. These terms, including the terms for subscriptions, shall be based on principles consistent with those applied to other countries that are already members.</p>	<p><i>Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article XXVI: Withdrawal from Membership -</p> <p>Section 1. Right of members to withdraw: Any member may withdraw from the Fund at any time by transmitting a notice in writing to the Fund at its principal office. Withdrawal shall become effective on the date such notice is received.</p> <p>Section 2. Compulsory withdrawal: (a) If a member fails to fulfill any of its obligations under this Agreement, the Fund may declare the member ineligible to use the</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
		<p>general resources of the Fund. Nothing in this Section shall be deemed to limit the provisions of Article V, Section 5 or Article VI, Section 1. (b) If, after the expiration of a reasonable period following a declaration of ineligibility under (a) above, the member persists in its failure to fulfill any of its obligations under this Agreement, the Fund may, by a seventy percent majority of the total voting power, suspend the voting rights of the member. During the period of the suspension, the provisions of Schedule L shall apply. The Fund may, by a seventy percent majority of the total voting power, terminate the suspension at any time. (c) If, after the expiration of a reasonable period following a decision of suspension under (b) above, the member persists in its failure to fulfill any of its obligations under this Agreement, that member may be required to withdraw from membership in the Fund by a decision of the Board of Governors carried by a majority of the Governors having eighty-five percent of the total voting power. (d) Regulations shall be adopted to ensure that before action is taken against any member under (a), (b), or (c) above, the member shall be informed in reasonable time of the complaint against it and given an adequate opportunity for stating its case, both orally and in writing.</p>
<p>World Bank Group* International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)</p>	<p><i>IBRD (the Bank), Articles of Agreement</i> Article II, Section 1 (a) The original members of the Bank shall be those members of the International Monetary Fund which accept membership in the Bank before the date specified... (b) Membership shall be open to other members of the Fund, at such times and in accordance with such terms as may be prescribed by the Bank.</p>	<p><i>IBRD (the Bank), Articles of Agreement</i> Article VI. Section 1. Right of Members to Withdraw. Any member may withdraw from the Bank at any time by transmitting a notice in writing to the Bank at its principal office. Withdrawal shall become effective on the date such notice is received. Section 2. Suspension of Membership. If a member fails to fulfill any of its obligations to the Bank, the Bank may suspend its membership by decision of a majority of the Governors, exercising a majority of the total voting power. The member so suspended shall automatically cease to be a member one year from the date of its</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
International Development Association (IDA)	<p><i>IDA, Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article II, Section I (a) The original members of the Association shall be those members of the Bank (IBRD) listed in Schedule A hereto which, on or before the date specified ... accept membership in the Association. (b) Membership shall be open to other members of the Bank at such times and in accordance with such terms as the Association may determine.</p>	<p>suspension unless a decision is taken by the same majority to restore the member to good standing. While under suspension, a member shall not be entitled to exercise any rights under this Agreement, except the right of withdrawal, but shall remain subject to all obligations.</p> <p><i>IDA, Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article VII. Section I. Withdrawal by Members. Any member may withdraw from membership in the Association at any time by transmitting, a notice in writing to the Association at its principal office. Withdrawal shall become effective upon the date such notice is received.</p> <p>Section 2. Suspension of Membership. (a) If a member fails to fulfill any of its obligations to the Association, the Association may suspend its membership by decision of a majority of the Governors, exercising a majority of the total voting power. The member so suspended shall automatically cease to be a member one year from the date of its suspension unless a decision is taken by the same majority to restore the member to good standing. (b) While under suspension, a member shall not be entitled to exercise any rights under this Agreement except the right of withdrawal, but shall remain subject to all obligations.</p> <p>Section 3. Suspension or Cessation of Membership in the Bank. Any member which is suspended from membership in, or ceases to be a member of, the Bank shall automatically be suspended from membership in, or cease to be a member of, the Association, as the case may be.</p>
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	<p><i>IFC, Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article II, Section I (a) The original members of the Corporation shall be those members of the Bank (IBRD) listed in Schedule A hereto which shall, on or before the date specified ... (c), accept membership in the Corporation. (b) Membership shall be open to other members of the Bank at such times and in</p>	<p><i>IFC, Articles of Agreement</i></p> <p>Article V. Section I. Withdrawal by Members (I) Any member may withdraw from membership in the Corporation at any time by transmitting a notice in writing to the Corporation at its principal office. Withdrawal shall become effective upon the date such notice is received.</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
	<p>accordance with such terms as may be prescribed by the Corporation.</p>	<p>Section 2. Suspension of Membership. (a) If a member fails to fulfill any of its obligations to the Corporation, the Corporation may suspend its membership by decision of a majority of the Governors, exercising a majority of the total voting power. The member so suspended shall automatically cease to be a member one year from the date of its suspension unless a decision is taken by the same majority to restore the member to good standing. (b) While under suspension, a member shall not be entitled to exercise any rights under this Agreement except the right of withdrawal, but shall remain subject to all obligations.</p> <p>Section 3. Suspension or Cessation of Membership in the Bank (IRBD). Any member which is suspended from membership in, or ceases to be a member of, the Bank shall automatically be suspended from membership in, or cease to be a member of, the Corporation, as the case may be.</p>
<p>Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)</p>	<p><u>MIGA</u>, Convention</p> <p>Article 4 (a) Membership in the Agency shall be open to all members of the Bank and to Switzerland.</p>	<p><u>MIGA</u>, Convention</p> <p>Article 51. Withdrawal. Any member may, after the expiration of three years following the date upon which this Convention has entered into force with respect to such member, withdraw from the Agency at any time by giving notice in writing to the Agency at its principal office. Article 52. Suspension of membership. If a member fails to fulfill any of its obligations under this Convention, the Council may, by a majority of its members exercising a majority of the total voting power, suspend its membership.</p>
<p>International Centre for Settlement of Investments and Disputes (ICSID)</p>	<p><u>ICSID</u>, Convention</p> <p>Article 67. This Convention shall be open for signature on behalf of States members of the Bank. It shall also be open for signature on behalf of any other State which is a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice and which the Administrative Council, by a vote of two-thirds of its members, shall have invited to sign the Convention.</p>	<p><u>ICSID</u>, Convention</p> <p>Article 71. Any Contracting State may denounce this Convention by written notice to the depositary of this Convention. The denunciation shall take effect six months after receipt of such notice.</p>

Specialized Agency	Provisions for Membership	Provisions for Withdrawal or Arrears
RELATED ORGANIZATION (NOT A SPECIALIZED AGENCY)		
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*	<p data-bbox="762 326 831 349"><i>Statute</i></p> <p data-bbox="762 362 1318 716">Article IV. B. Other members of the Agency shall be those States, whether or not Members of the United Nations or of any of the specialized agencies, which deposit an instrument of acceptance of this Statute after their membership has been approved by the General Conference upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors. In recommending and approving a State for membership, the Board of Governors and the General Conference shall determine that the State is able and willing to carry out the obligations of membership in the Agency, giving due consideration to its ability and willingness to act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.</p>	<p data-bbox="1329 326 1398 349"><i>Statute</i></p> <p data-bbox="1329 362 1896 605">Article XVII. D. At any time after five years from the date when this Statute shall take effect in accordance with paragraph E of article XXI or whenever a member is unwilling to accept an amendment to this Statute, it may withdraw from the Agency by notice in writing to that effect given to the depositary Government referred to in paragraph C of article XXI, which shall promptly inform the Board of Governors and all members.</p> <p data-bbox="1329 613 1896 716">E. Withdrawal by a member from the Agency shall not affect its contractual obligations entered into pursuant to article XI or its budgetary obligations for the year in which it withdraws.</p> <p data-bbox="1329 724 1896 976">Article XIX. A. A member of the Agency which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Agency shall have no vote in the Agency if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two years. The General Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the member.</p> <p data-bbox="1329 984 1896 1172">B. A member which has persistently violated the provisions of this Statute or of any agreement entered into by it pursuant to this Statute may be suspended from the exercise of the privileges and rights of membership by the General Conference acting by a two- thirds majority of the members present and voting upon recommendation by the Board of Governors.</p>

Source: CRS; various U.N. specialized agency conventions, statutes, or constitutions.

Note: The United States is currently withholding funding to UNESCO; however, it remains a member of the organization. An asterisk* denotes U.S. membership.

Author Contact Information

(name redacted)
Specialist in International Relations
[redacted]@crs.loc.gov, 7-....

(name redacted)
Specialist in International Relations
[redacted]@crs.loc.gov, 7-....

EveryCRSReport.com

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a federal legislative branch agency, housed inside the Library of Congress, charged with providing the United States Congress non-partisan advice on issues that may come before Congress.

EveryCRSReport.com republishes CRS reports that are available to all Congressional staff. The reports are not classified, and Members of Congress routinely make individual reports available to the public.

Prior to our republication, we redacted names, phone numbers and email addresses of analysts who produced the reports. We also added this page to the report. We have not intentionally made any other changes to any report published on EveryCRSReport.com.

CRS reports, as a work of the United States government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.

Information in a CRS report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to members of Congress in connection with CRS' institutional role.

EveryCRSReport.com is not a government website and is not affiliated with CRS. We do not claim copyright on any CRS report we have republished.