

LWVUS United Nations Observer Role

Unlike other League roles, the role of the Chief Observer and other designated Observers is governed by the United Nations. In 1945 and upon advice from President Truman, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) granted the League of Women Voters of the United States (one of the 41 non governmental organizations) with consultative status. In 1976, under Resolution 1996/31, ECOSOC amended its process governing the consultative relationship between the UN and NGOs. In 1997, the League of Women Voters of the United States, applied for and was granted special consultative status. Resolution 1996/31 identifies the consultative relationship between the United Nations and those NGOs enjoying consultative status, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Chief (main) Observer and 4 other Observers that are permitted to serve at UN headquarters in NYC. The Leagues' re-accreditation must be applied for every 4 years and is reviewed and decided upon the ECOSOC Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations, which is comprised of the Ambassadors from 19 member states.

As Observer to the United Nations on behalf of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the role is responsible for the following:

- “Sit as observers at public meetings of the Economic and Social Council, its subsidiary bodies, commissions, subsidiary organs and adhoc committees. Attendance arrangements may be supplemented to include other modalities of participation.”
- Provide “written statements relevant to the work of the Economic and Social Council in which [the League] has a special competence.”
- When requested, provide oral statements to the Economic and Social Council and on the subject in its field of interest.
- Participate in international conferences convened by the UN and in their preparatory process.
- “Consult with officers of the appropriate sections of the Secretariat on matters in which there is mutual interest or a mutual concern. “
- At the request of the Secretariat, prepare specific studies or papers, help organize informal discussions and generally work on matters of mutual concern.
- Ensuring that League is officially represented at the UN and maintains its accreditation with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

Additionally, since there are specific criteria for the renewal of the accreditation which requires that ECOSOC be aware of the League's work with the United Nations areas of concern, the Observer is to work in coordination with the Observers and the Chief Observer to carry out strategies and goals agreed to annually. These include:

- Expanding awareness throughout the League of the intersectionality between the UN and shared priorities and activities with the League;
- Enabling the participation and attendance of League delegates to conferences and programmes to which the League has been invited to and sponsored by the United Nations agencies, member states and/or accredited non-governmental organizations.
- Developing of materials and and programmes that are in concert with the strategies and goals approved by the LWVUS-UN Observer Corps.

There are 4 UN Observers to the United Nations and they are appointed by the Chief Observer to serve at UN Headquarters in New York. The Chief Observer can appoint 1 or 2 additional Observers to be to portfolios that are at other UN locations. For example, both the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Climate Change personnel are currently headquartered in Geneva. Observers are appointed annually in order to receive the appropriate credentials.