



Get into UN75

The 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

9 January 2020

The United Nations was created in 1945 as part of the effort to prevent a repeat of the destruction of the Second World War by promoting peace and prosperity globally.

Over its existence, it has gone from having just 51 Member States to 193, and has engaged in activities from peacekeeping to disease prevention around the world.

Despite many successes, there is clearly still much to do. It is for this reason that the United Nations is looking to use its 75th anniversary to look ahead to the next 25 years, and seek views on where its priorities should lie.

The plans offer many opportunities for libraries to get involved. This guide offers more background about the year ahead, and ideas on how you can play your part.



What Are the Goals of the 75th Anniversary?

The United Nations Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, and entered into force on 24 October.

It set out the goals of the United Nations – to keep peace, to promote friendly relations, to tackle the challenges of hunger, disease, illiteracy and disregard for human rights, and to align the actions of member governments to achieve this.



75 years on, these goals remain as valid as before, as does the need for action to reach them. However, as the UN Secretary General has underlined, there is a need to think about how international cooperation can contribute to this goal.

As a result, the UN will be marking its 75th anniversary year by encouraging ‘debate and action on the global trends shaping our ability to take forward the world’s commitments in these areas; by bringing these issues to a large and diverse global audience; by supporting dialogues in the lead-up to and within the margins of these events; by highlighting the importance of enhanced global action to all these areas; and by stimulating a critical discussion on how we can reinvigorate support for global cooperation and make it more effective and inclusive’.

In short, it is looking to find answers to the following three questions:

- What future do we want?
- Are we on track?
- What action is needed?

When Is This Taking Place?

In short, now! The UN initially communicated about its plans in October, on the 74th anniversary of the UN’s official creation, on 24 October 2019.

The formal launch took place on 2 January, with the publication of a website with plenty of tools available for use by people around the world, in all of the UN’s languages.

Over the coming months, the UN is looking to encourage conversations, alongside organising a short survey, opinion polling, and analysis of social

media. The goal of this is to collect information and ideas on how to take the UN forwards.

Key areas highlighted for discussion include the impact of new technologies, the risk of conflict, inequality, climate change, and demographics. A toolkit is available to help (see below).



These findings will be presented at a special event during the UN General Assembly on 21 September 2020, under the title: 'The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism'. Events and other celebrations will continue until UN Day itself on 24 October.

This effectively means that there are nine months still in order to act – and contribute!

Why Engage?

Of course, the United Nations can seem distant from your daily work. So why give over time to celebrations around its 75th Anniversary?

A first reason is that it remains the key global forum bringing together leaders. If the UN underlines the importance of access to information in its own declarations and communications, this gives libraries a major boost. We can work with UN agencies, and refer to UN documents, in making the case for our own work.



A second is that libraries themselves already have a role in helping people to engage with the key issues facing their communities. They can be excellent spaces for civic engagement and discussion.

A third reason is that, as we reflect on the challenges facing the world in the coming years, information – including overcoming the information divide, and giving people the tools to use it effectively – is likely to be crucial. The UN needs to hear this.

What Can You Do?

There are plenty of different options for getting involved in the 75th Anniversary celebrations, with many ideas and tools available on the website specially created for this.

In particular, you might want to do one or more of the following, from least to most effort:

- Visit the [website](#), and read the [issue briefs](#).
- Respond to the [1-Minute Survey](#) (in all UN languages).
- Share links to these material on social media and other communications channels, and encourage others to engage, using the #un75 hashtag.
- Contact your Resident Coordinator to find out about opportunities to work nationally (click on your country in [this list](#) to see who this is).
- Organise a dialogue in your library or at your conference! The UN's [toolkit](#) offers a number of options and guiding ideas and questions, from informal discussions and online debates to more formal consultations. There is also a [branding pack](#). Once you've decided what you want to do, fill in the [form](#) to get further information. You should then be ready to report back afterwards, including with photos, about what you talked about, and how it went.
- In particular, you may want to organise discussions with young people or other groups at risk of not being included!

