

# UNDP's Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC)

---

## Background

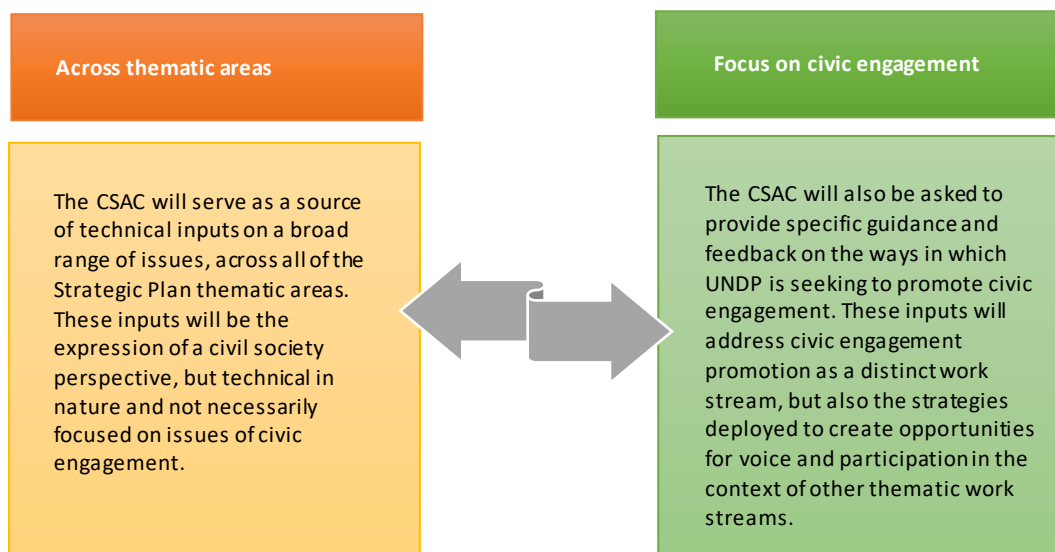
1. The 2010 Human Development Report "*The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*" notes that, in order to fully realise the human development agenda, progress must not only be equitable and broad-based, but it must also enable people to become active participants in change. For this reason, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) attaches critical importance to the full involvement of civil society actors in all aspects of its work.
2. The UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC) is an advisory body of the United Nations Development Programme. Established in 2000 to systematize the consultation process between UNDP and civil society actors, the CSAC currently functions as the main institutional mechanism for dialogue between civil society leaders and UNDP senior management on major matters of strategy and policy.
3. By contributing independent perspectives and critical analyses on different aspects of UNDP's work, the CSAC has had, over the years, a significant positive impact on the organization. Among other things, this resulted in a strengthening of the civic engagement dimension of UNDP's policies and programmes, as well as in greater collaboration between UNDP and a broad range of civil society constituencies.

## Objectives and operating modalities

### Objectives

4. The CSAC can play a critical role in shaping relevant programmatic aspects of UNDP's work through its engagement in the definition and articulation of key strategies and policy positions. For this reason, the CSAC advisory functions are not be confined to issues of civic engagement and civic space, or indeed to any specific thematic area, but rather cover issues across all the dimensions of UNDP's work.
5. At the same time, interactions with the Committee represent an exceptional opportunity to obtain the views of a broad range of civil society constituencies on UNDP's efforts to promote voice and participation as goals in their own right. A very explicit and proactive effort is made, therefore, to maximize the Committee's potential as a source of guidance with respect to UNDP's work on civic engagement.

**Figure 1. Different substantive inputs to be provided by the CSAC**



6. Although members sit in their personal capacities, rather than as representatives of the civic organisations in which they are active, through its diverse membership, the CSAC can provide strategic entry points into important civil society constituencies and assist UNDP in its efforts to reach out to key civil society actors at global, regional and country level. For this reason, partnership development is regarded as a distinct and essential component of the interaction between UNDP and the CSAC.
7. Notwithstanding the diversity of roles and organizational mandates, UNDP and the members of the CSAC share a common commitment to sustainable human development and the realization of human rights. There is a significant potential, therefore, for UNDP and the CSAC to join hands in advocacy efforts on matters of shared concern, without prejudice to their respective independence. This collaboration may materialize, for instance, through the participation of individual Committee members as speakers in UNDP events, but also through the organization of joint events with individual or multiple members and the development of common messages on key emerging issues.
8. Based on the above considerations, the specific objectives of UNDP's Civil Society Advisory Committee are defined as follows.

**Table 2. CSAC's specific objectives**

KEY FOCUS	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
<b>Strategy and policy</b>	Provide substantive inputs into the development of key UNDP strategies and policies across UNDP's three substantive areas of focus: sustainable development pathways, inclusive and effective democratic governance and resilience
<b>Civic engagement</b>	Advise UNDP on different aspects of its work to promote civic engagement at global, regional and country level, including on the most appropriate strategies to expand and protect civic space as well as ways to strengthen the capacity of key civil society actors
<b>Partnership</b>	Support UNDP outreach and partnership development efforts by facilitating the creation of appropriate communication channels with key civil society constituencies represented on the Committee at global, regional and country level
<b>Advocacy</b>	Join hands with UNDP in advocacy efforts on matter of shared concern, including through the organization of joint events, the development of common messages, and the participation of individual Committee members as speakers in UNDP event, or of UNDP staff as speakers in civil society events

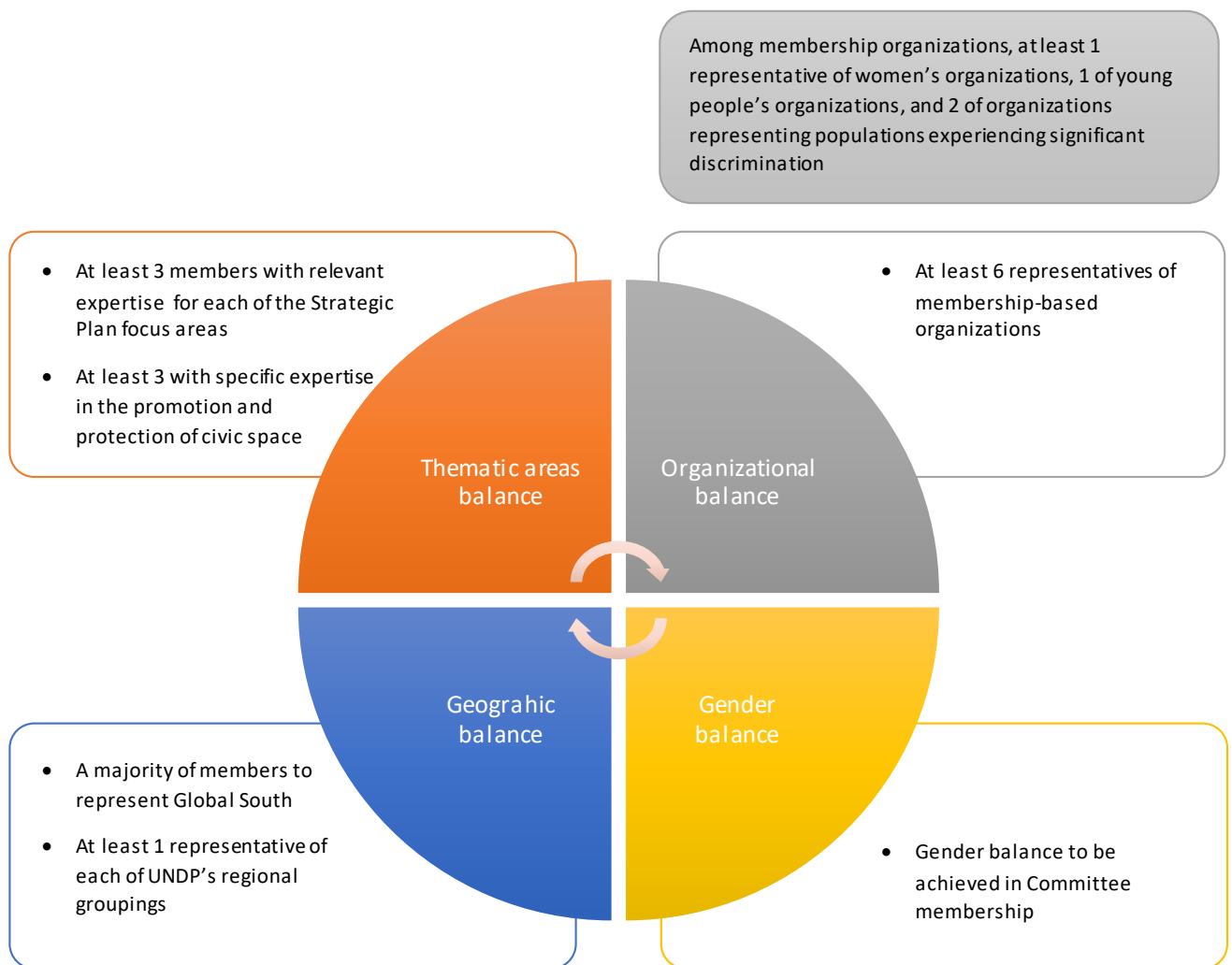
9. In addition to the above, the possibility remains to seek the engagement of individual Committee members – based on their technical expertise – in programme development and implementation, particularly for programmes that are considered especially critical in view of their size and strategic relevance.

## Membership

19. CSAC members are appointed by UNDP senior management based on their expertise and outstanding track record of achievement in relevant areas of work. It is vital – in order for the Committee to effectively perform its functions – that its membership composition be at the same time reflective of the diversity of civil society and relevant to UNDP's mandate and thematic areas of focus. Given this basic premise, the following membership composition framework is used as a guide for the Committee's membership renewal process.

**Figure 5. CSAC membership composition framework**

Number of members	Approximately between 12 and 15
Composition criteria	<p>Membership to be balanced along four dimensions (keeping in mind that each member will typically satisfy several criteria):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNDP thematic areas of focus</li> <li>Forms of civic organizing – membership vs. non-membership organizations</li> <li>Geographic provenience of members – Global North vs. Global South</li> <li>Sex of members</li> </ul>



10. As already noted, committee members serve in an individual capacity and not as representatives of specific organizations. References to organizational affiliation contained in the Committee's membership composition framework are simply meant to ensure that members' backgrounds are representative of multiple forms of civic organizing. They should not be seen as implying any kind of formal relationship between the Committee and its members' organizations.

## Secretariat

11. The Secretariat of the CSAC, based in the Inclusive Political Processes Team of UNDP's Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster, supports the overall Committee's functioning by performing the following tasks:
  - Facilitate communication flow between UNDP's senior management and the Committee's Co-Chairs;
  - Facilitate the agenda-setting process for Annual Meetings;
  - Facilitate communication flow in relation to preparations for the Annual Meeting, including communication with relevant substantive units on the preparation of background documents;
  - Support drafting of the Annual Meeting final report and monitoring of recommendations followup;
  - Facilitate communication between relevant substantive units and the Committee between Annual Meetings;
  - Facilitate the process of membership renewal.