



The Anglican Communion & the United Nations: *Factsheet*

The role of the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations is to represent and raise up Anglican interests at all levels of the United Nations, so that grassroots communities across the Communion can engage more effectively and positively with the UN system



The Anglican Communion Office has a small staff team to represent the global [Anglican Communion at the United Nations \(ACOUN\)](#). The team comprises the Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Jack Palmer-White, the Advocacy Officer and Head of Office in New York, Jillian Abballe, and two Research and Administration Assistants – one based at the Anglican Communion Office in London, and one at the team's office in New York.

The Anglican Communion has been represented formally at the United Nations since 1985, when it first achieved 'Special Consultative Status' with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. Since then, the Anglican Communion has been represented by a wide range of ordained and lay Representatives in New York and Geneva. This status enables Anglican voices to be heard across the United Nations, through written and oral statements, meetings with the Missions of Member States and through the presence of Anglican delegations at UN meetings.

The Anglican Communion's representation at the UN is led by the ACOUN team who work to ensure that the remarkable work taking place across the regions, provinces, dioceses and agencies of the Anglican Communion is recognised by the United Nations. Our vision is for the UN to acknowledge and partner more effectively and enthusiastically with local churches around the Communion, so that they are acknowledged as vital, credible, durable, sustainable, equitable and locally committed partners.

With all countries of the world committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, the ACOUN team works with UN agencies, faith-based and non-profit organisations and national governments to support progress towards these goals. More information can be found on [our website](#).

Recognising the diversity of experiences and contexts across a Communion of churches spanning over 165 countries in all regions of the world, the ACOUN's work at the UN currently focuses on eight key issues:

[refugees, migration and displacement](#)

[statelessness](#) and [birth registration](#)

[global health](#)

[human rights accountability](#)

[indigenous rights](#)

[women's rights](#)

[environment, climate change](#) and [sustainable communities](#)

[peace and security](#)



Jack Palmer-White, the Anglican Communion's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, & Jillian Abballe, Advocacy Officer and Head of New York Office

Refugees, Migration & Displacement

The Anglican Communion supports the UN's [Welcoming the Stranger](#) campaign, which commits faith communities to a core set of principles to guide their welcome and support for displaced people.

The Permanent Representative has participated in consultation sessions of the drafting of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Both of the Compacts make explicit reference to the important role that faith actors can play in supporting displaced people.

In 2018, the Anglican Communion Office co-sponsored an official side event at the UN Human Rights Council on the human rights of refugees and supported the participation of '[Refuge Egypt](#)' in UN meetings on refugees in urban settings. In 2019, the team will develop tools and resources to support church leaders in places where there have been significant levels of displacement.

The Anglican Communion Office has also called for the UN to improve its protection for internally displaced persons, through support for the [GP20 campaign](#). The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion has supported these efforts through signing a major interfaith letter to heads of state.



Statelessness & Birth Registration

The Anglican Communion Office is a signatory to the UN's [#IBelong](#) campaign, which is working to end statelessness around the world by 2024. We believe that everyone has the right to statehood and a nationality. Stateless people may have difficulty accessing basic rights, such as education, healthcare and employment.

Minority communities, including religious, ethnic and racial minorities, can be particularly vulnerable to statelessness, for example if new states emerge, or borders change. The Permanent Representative regularly briefs the UNHCR Statelessness Unit and the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights on situations of vulnerability to statelessness around the Anglican Communion.

In 2018, ACOUN co-sponsored a regional lobbying visit to the Caribbean, where faith leaders (including Anglican representation) called on national governments to review nationality laws that discriminate against people on the grounds of gender when passing on nationality to their children.

Global Health

All across the Anglican Communion, churches are providing front-line medical and health services to local communities. Anglicans are running hospitals, health centres, immunisation programmes and many other services.

The ACOUN team works to share examples of this work with UN agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

In 2018, we supported the visit of a number of Anglican bishops to speak at a side event on ending malaria in New York during the UN General Assembly.

In 2019, the ACO is co-sponsoring an international workshop on strengthening collaboration between faith actors and other agencies to support migrants and refugees living with HIV/AIDS.

Human Rights

ACOUN staff participate in sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, identifying opportunities to work with Anglicans around the world to raise issues of concern.

In 2018, the team [produced and published a toolkit](#) to support Anglican participation in the Universal Periodic Review process, which reviews the human rights record of all UN members states. Because of the Anglican Communion's consultative status at the UN, all member churches are able to submit reports as part of this review process.

A list of country review dates is available on our website.

Women's Rights & Gender Justice

Each year, a delegation of Anglican women participates in the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. This provides an opportunity for Anglican women to share their experiences and expertise with other Anglicans, other non-governmental and faith-based organisations, and have opportunities to lobby their governments and UN agencies to sign up to strong agreements on the themes of each session.

In March 2019, a delegation of eight Anglican women will attend the two-week session, which has a particular focus on social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

In the months before the Commission, ACOUN staff provide briefing and training for the delegates on how to engage with the UN and their governments before, during and after the meeting. The delegation is encouraged to develop an advocacy plan to support their activity, and are given a wide range of opportunities to learn and to share their experiences—whether in their professional lives, or in their work serving the church.

In 2019, the ACOUN team will also be developing briefings and a toolkit to encourage provinces and dioceses to review their country's record on women's rights, particularly in how they are implementing the [Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#).

Indigenous Rights

[The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#) was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007. Its purpose is to address the past and ongoing violence and abuse of indigenous individuals and peoples.

In 2017, a meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion reaffirmed their collective commitment to the UNDRIP, calling on states to work to achieve the declaration's goals:

"We heard of the plight of Indigenous Peoples, resulting from government policies of forced assimilation associated with colonial expansion... [and we] reaffirmed our commitment to encourage all governments to support the UN Declaration".

Through participation and advocacy at the annual UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), ACOUN, in partnership with the Anglican Indigenous Network, is committed to supporting and sharing resources with indigenous communities, and also helping to highlight and address urgent issues affecting these communities, such as climate change and inter-generational trauma.

The UN has designated 2019 as the [Year of Indigenous Languages](#). Throughout 2019, the ACO will be promoting the Year and producing resources and tools to encourage Anglicans to help support the preservation and awareness of indigenous languages used in their countries, including languages used in the context of worship.

Environment, Climate Change & Sustainable Communities

As Anglicans, we are called in the Five Marks of Mission "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth". Environmental challenges do not stop at national borders, and so the ACOUN team seeks to link provinces and dioceses of the Communion with key partners at the UN to work collaboratively to tackle major climate and environmental issues.

Since 2018, the Anglican Communion has been recognised as a partner by the [UN Environment Programme](#) and will be sending a delegation to the meeting of the UN Environmental Assembly in March 2019. This is an important opportunity to highlight work around the Anglican Communion to safeguard creation and support measures to reduce the negative impact that our practices and lifestyles are having on the world.

In 2019, the Anglican Communion will also apply for accreditation to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will allow more opportunities to advocate directly with governments and the UN regarding global commitments on climate change.

Peace and Security



Leaders from around the Anglican Communion are regularly invited to participate in high-level meetings and other events related to issues of conflict, peace and security and reconciliation.

During Geneva Peace Week 2018, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Most Revd Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, was a panellist at an event on Inter-faith Dialogue for Conflict Prevention and Resolution, where he spoke about his front-line work on issues of peace and reconciliation in Nigeria.



The Permanent Representative also acts as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Personal Representative to the United Nations. This particularly includes supporting the Archbishop's role as a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, through which the Archbishop provides expert advice and information to the UN Secretary-General and UN Secretariat on issues relating to peace, security and conflict resolution.

In August 2018, Archbishop Welby became the first Archbishop of Canterbury to address the UN Security Council. The Archbishop was speaking as an invited Expert Briefer at the start of an open debate on "Mediation and Settlement of Disputes". He shared expertise and experience on the topic from around the Anglican Communion.

We want to support more Anglicans to get involved in this work. ACOUN wants to increase engagement at UN events because they are an opportunity to share Anglican expertise and experience, and the values of our Christian faith. There is a wide range of events at the UN during 2019. A [full list of meetings](#) is available on our website.

If you are interested in representing the Anglican Communion at the UN on particular issues, please complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) available on our website. A member of the ACOUN team will contact you.



Contact Us

Use the **Expression of Interest** form on the website

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