



Resource Guide

WFUNA International Model United Nations New York City 2024

30 January 2024 - 2 February 2024

Intercontinental Times Square and The Westin Times Square

**ECOSOC Commission on Crime Prevention
and Criminal**

Equal Access to Justice for All





Welcome to WFUNA International Model United Nations New York 2024.

We are very pleased to introduce you to the most authentic simulation of the United Nations in the world; and hope to contribute to your understanding of the Organisation, its mandate, and its critical role in global affairs.

Through a series of pre-conference webinars that will be offered and documents – like this resource guide – we aim to educate you not only about the global issues on the UN agenda, but also about the ways and means through which those topics are discussed, debated and negotiated by real UN diplomats.

This resource guide will provide you with a head start in doing research to gain a deeper understanding of the global issue that you will be discussing and the actions that the government you have been assigned recommends that the international community should take to address this issue. To make the research process a bit easier, the resource guide has been divided into sections and subsections to assist you in researching these two components. We strongly recommend you to give a careful look through the sources listed below so that the interaction with your peers is as exciting as possible.

We wish you all the very best in this journey of learning!





Topic Description

The main concern in seeking equal access to justice is to ensure that justice systems are fair, impartial, accessible and inclusive for all people regardless of their gender, race, religion, political or other opinion, national origin, socio-economic status or other status. This concern is grounded in the principles of human rights, the rule of law and the promotion of social justice, that are the foundation of the UN Charter.

Equality means everything. Everyone in society should enjoy all access to equal rights without any discrimination or bias. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) Article 25 states that “all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.”

Achieving this goal entails improving access to legal services, such as, legal aid for marginalized and vulnerable populations, addressing gender-based discrimination within the justice system, recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples to access justice in culturally appropriate ways that are respectful of their traditional systems of justice, where applicable, ensuring that justice systems are accessible to persons with disabilities, and child sensitive. In post-conflict settings it often involves achieving reconciliation through mechanisms such as truth commissions and reparations programs.

It is estimated that 1.5 billion people have unmet criminal, civil or administrative justice needs. They are unable to use the law to defend themselves from violence and crime, protect their rights or resolve disputes peacefully. In a number of countries, the law still actively discriminates against women, who in effect enjoy only three quarters of the legal rights of men.

With the adoption of SDG 16 and along with it, target 16.3, the international community undertook to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and to ensure equal access to justice for all.

There are many challenges that hinder access to justice, including inadequate legislation and policies, limited financial resources, a lack of knowledge of which services exist and how to access them, and insufficient numbers of qualified legal actors to effectively deliver support. Furthermore, measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closing of courts, had a massive impact on pre-trial detainees, prisoners and victims of crime and put a spotlight on the absence of mechanisms for accessing justice in many countries. A resort to remote hearings often impacted the rights to due process and to a fair trial, and excluded poor persons, as they did not have the means to pay for or understand how to use the required technology. These barriers to justice have a negative impact on the economy which results in increased poverty and exclusion.



Overcoming these challenges will require:

- promoting access to legal aid in the justice systems, which includes legal advice, assistance and representation provided at no cost for those without sufficient means or when the interests of justice so require;
- human-rights based and gender-sensitive justice reform, including police reform;
- increasing the efficiency, accountability, and integrity of criminal justice institutions;
- widening the use of restorative justice;
- protecting, assisting and supporting victims of crime;
- addressing hate crimes;
- ensuring access to justice for groups facing discrimination and exclusion and addressing discrimination within the justice system.





Official Resources on the Topic

- [Equal access to justice for all: resolution / adopted by the Economic and Social Council](#)
Summary: The resolution adopted by consensus concerning equal access to justice for all at the 43rd session of the Economic and Social Council on the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).
Published: 2023
- [Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels](#)
Summary: The website gives an overview of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and its sub-goals. It also lists the target content and indicators underneath each goal and sub-goals. (https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#targets_and_indicators). Goal 16.3 mentioned “promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all”. The website also enables delegates to track the progress and info on the implementation of SDG 16 (https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16#progress_and_info) that includes some interesting statistics relevant to this topic.
Published: 2023
- [PGA remarks to High-level debate of the General Assembly on Equal Access to Justice for All](#)
Summary: The remark of the President of the 77th session of the General Assembly addressed the importance of the issue of Equal Access to Justice for All from multiple perspectives. It includes the significance of the issue, counting it as a fundamental human right. Also, the issue is a central element of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and critical to the achievement of the 2030 agenda: leaving no one behind because of its importance to SDG 1. Additionally, the President mentioned several key tenets of promoting access to justice that must be consistently upheld.
Published: 2023
- [Statement of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Call to States to reinvigorate access to justice for all](#)
Summary: This statement, which is part of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, calls attention to the fact that in spite of many advances the call to provide access to justice for all is off track.



Consequently, it calls for States to take steps to reinvigorate access to justice at the national level and to finance and support SDG 16 globally.

Published: 2023

- [Strengthening justice, rule of law critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, say G7, ASEAN and UNDP leaders](#)

Summary: The Justice Affairs Diplomacy Ministerial Forum 2023 in Tokyo concluded with a shared vision among G7, ASEAN, UNDP and UNODC leaders for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world. Importantly, the Forum emphasized the need for sustained international cooperation and commitment to realizing these goals for the betterment of all nations.

Published: 2023

- [UNECE: Fourteenth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice under the Aarhus Convention](#)

Summary: The website provides links to multiple outcome documents of the fourteenth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice which aimed to provide a platform for exchanging information, experiences and good practices with regard to key recent developments in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention's pillar on access to justice and possible measures to remove barriers hampering its implementation.

Published: 2022

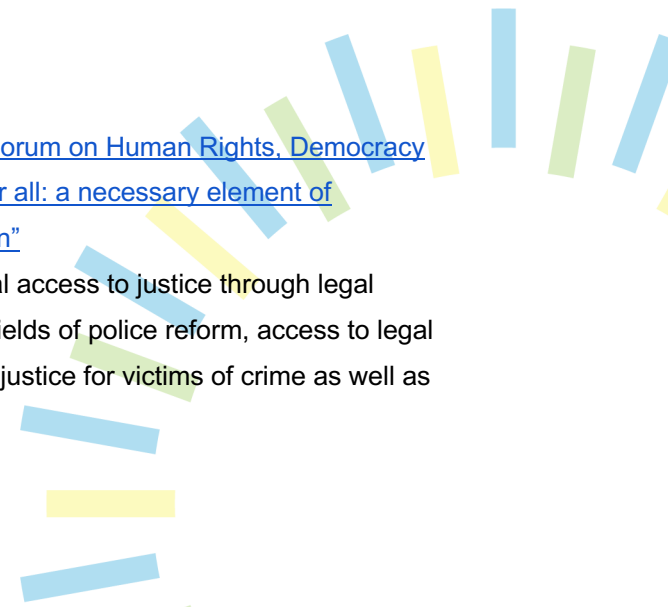
- [Concept Notes at the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: Equal Access to Justice for All](#)

Summary: The concept notes describe the significance of promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice. It pointed out that one key element of enabling access to justice is access to legal advice and representation through legal aid. It also highlights what the potential impact would be if certain groups of people were restricted in their access to justice.

Published: 2021

- [Statement of UNODC at the Third session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on "Equal access to justice for all: a necessary element of democracy, rule of law and human rights protection"](#)

Summary: The UNODC statement promotes equal access to justice through legal advisory services and technical assistance in the fields of police reform, access to legal aid, restorative justice programmes and access to justice for victims of crime as well as





specific programmes addressing gender in the criminal justice system, criminal justice responses to gender-based violence as well as the rights of children to access justice and its participation and effort they made to the issue.

Published: 2021

- [Guaranteeing equal access to justice for all – even during a pandemic at Ukrainian Symposium](#)

Summary: The article is about an online meeting of legal aid experts from around the globe organized by UNDP to discuss the challenges and solutions in providing free legal aid during the COVID-19 pandemic. Seven countries share the best practices and solutions to adjust to the new reality, discussing and recording the challenges and solutions.

Published: 2021

- [UNODC Guidance Note: Ensuring Access to Justice in the Context of COVID-19](#)

Summary: The guidance note is written to provide guidance to practitioners and policymakers in the justice sector to ensure access to justice in the context of COVID-19. It focuses on three areas, preparation, response, and recovery to address the short, medium, and long-term impact of the crisis.

Published: 2020

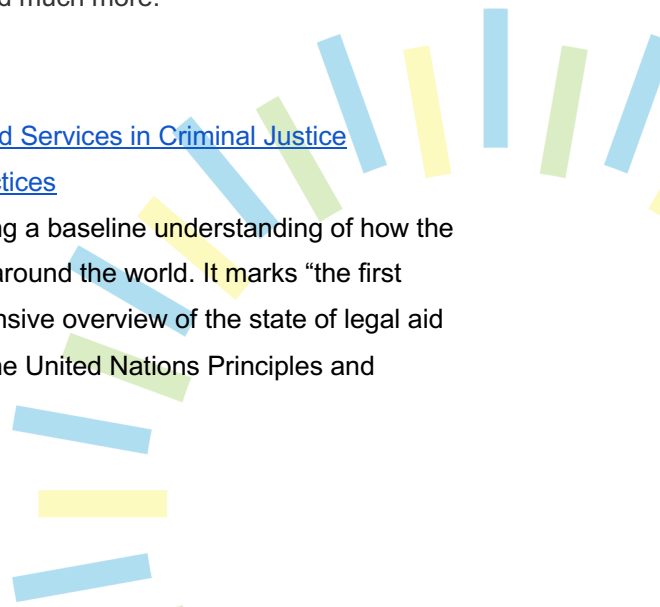
- [Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Proceedings - University Module Series](#)

Summary: Developed under UNODC's Education for Justice (E4J) initiative, a component of the Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, this Module forms part of the E4J University Module Series and provides a comprehensive introduction to access to legal aid which is a critical component of achieving equal access to justice. This module includes an intro to the international standards and norms concerning access to legal aid in criminal justice systems, key components of the right of access to legal aid, access to legal aid for those with specific needs and much more.

Published: 2019

- [UNODC Handbook on Ensuring Quality of Legal Aid Services in Criminal Justice Processes: Practical Guidance and Promising Practices](#)

Summary: The document was aimed at establishing a baseline understanding of how the right to legal aid has been defined and addressed around the world. It marks “the first attempt to collect data on and present a comprehensive overview of the state of legal aid globally.” The handbook provides an overview of the United Nations Principles and





Guidelines on access to legal aid in criminal justice systems and outlines measures to ensure access to legal aid at all stages of criminal proceedings. In addition, it encourages global sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Published: 2019

- [World Bank: A Tool for Justice: The cost benefit analysis of legal aid](#)

Summary: Written for policymakers and those who influence them, this document examines the findings of the various cost benefit analyses and provides guidance on how to conduct one's cost benefit analysis of a legal aid program.

Published: 2019

- [Resolution on United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems adopted at the 67th GA session](#)

Summary: This is a seminal document that had a major impact on setting guidelines for achieving access to justice for all. The principles are described in Annex B.

Published: 2017

- [Access to Justice – Concept Note](#)

Summary: This concept note elaborates a general recommendation endorsed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its 53rd Session on women's access to justice. This comprehensive document includes information on the CEDAW legal framework relating to access to justice, women's challenges and barriers in accessing justice and much more.

Published: 2012

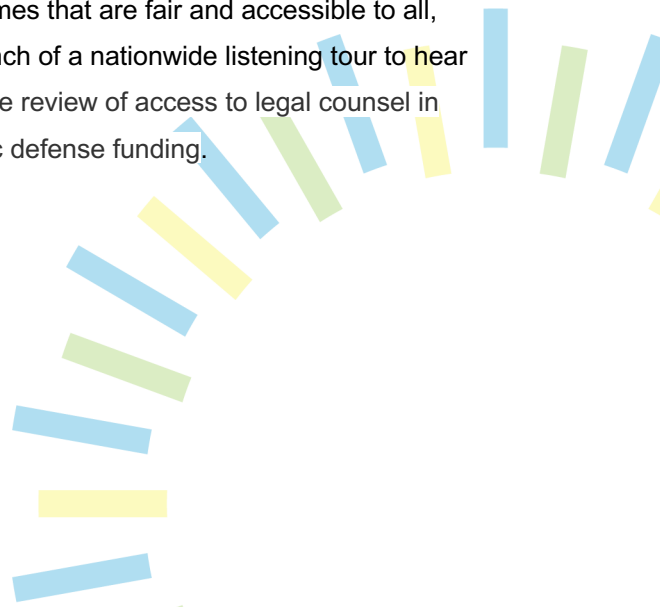




Official Statements/Documents issued by Member-States

Statements

- [Statements of the 32nd Session of CCPCJ](#)
Summary: The webpage contains links to all statements made during the 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) including Member States, regional groups and all other entities..
Published: 2023
- [Japan's statement at the High-level debate on "Equal Access to Justice for All: Advancing Reforms for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies"](#)
Summary: This statement highlights the importance of supporting victims by educating care providers and the general public on the importance of understanding the circumstances the victims are put under and with this in mind revised its "Basic Plan for Crime Victims".
Published: 2023
- [Italy's Statement at High-level Debate of the United Nations General Assembly on "Equal Access to Justice for All: Advancing Reforms for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies"](#)
Summary: The statement from Italy summarizes the major efforts of the UN and other regional bodies to ensure access to justice and further points out aspects of the Italian legal system that are aligned with these efforts.
Published: 2023
- [Remarks of Ambassador Chris Lu at General Assembly High-Level Debate on Equal Access to Justice for All](#)
Summary: The address introduced a few policies towards fully achieving the mission of "helping the justice system efficiently deliver outcomes that are fair and accessible to all, irrespective of wealth and status" including the launch of a nationwide listening tour to hear from public defense professionals, a comprehensive review of access to legal counsel in federal prison facilities, and a plan to expand public defense funding.
Published: 2023





- [The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP of Australia: Address on United Nations General Assembly High-Level Debate on Equal Access to Justice for All](#)

Summary: The address mentions three areas where Australia is taking action towards equal access to justice for all that includes a Disability Strategy 2021-2031 to ensure that the criminal justice system responds effectively to the needs of people with disability, National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children to enhance access for witnesses and victim-survivors and in partnership with Aboriginal and other indigenous organizations to improve youth justice and child protection systems.

Published: 2023

- [United States Statement from Director Rachel Rossi of the Office of Public Affairs for Access to Justice on the Adoption of the Equal Access to Justice Resolution at the United Nations Crime Commission](#)

Summary: This statement summarizes the position of the United States Office for Access to Justice following the adoption of the “Equal Access to Justice for All” resolution at the 32nd Session of United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. It reaffirmed the spirit of the resolution on access to justice and also mentioned that it is aligned with its mission.

Published: 2023

- [Namibia’s Statement at the 3rd Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#)

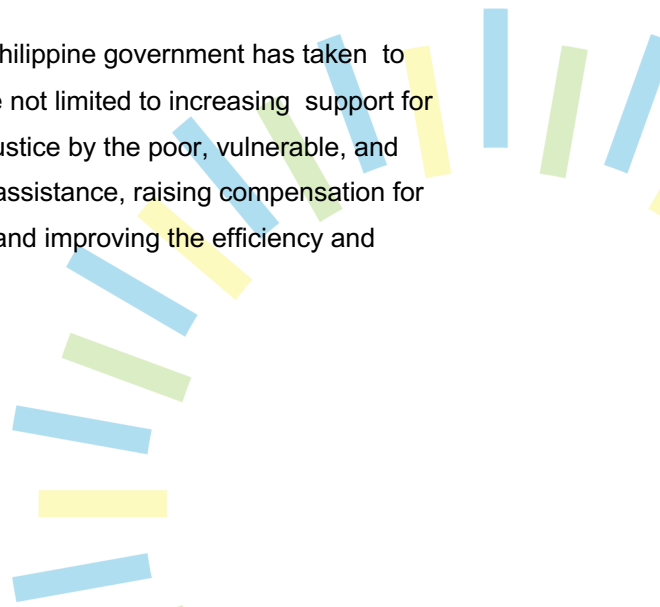
Summary: This statement affirms access to justice as a cornerstone of its democratic society and highlights the e-justice filing system that was used during the pandemic so that the court system could remain accessible. It also emphasizes that Namibia is now seeking to further strengthen their emergency-responsive judicial system.

Published: 2021

- [Philippines’ Statement at the 3rd Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#)

Summary: This statement highlights actions the Philippine government has taken to improve equal access to justice that include but are not limited to increasing support for the Public Attorney’s Office to enhance access to justice by the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups, increasing support for victim assistance, raising compensation for victims of violent crimes and unjust imprisonment, and improving the efficiency and accountability of the Philippine justice sector.

Published: 2021





- [South Africa Statement by Legal Adviser to the United Nations in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly under Agenda Item 83 “Rule of Law at the National and International Level”](#)

Summary: The Legal Adviser to the Permanent Mission of South Africa of the UN begins by aligning his country with the statements made by the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Legal Adviser points out that legal aid is a way to strengthen access to justice and that South Africa has been a leading voice on the need to improve access to counsel for indigent and marginalized accused persons. .

Published: 2014

Documents

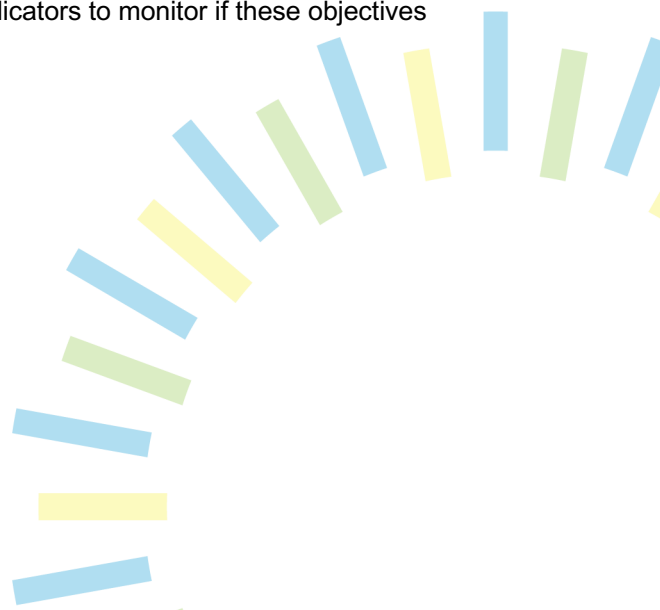
- [The Hague Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030](#)

Summary: In 2019, Ministers and high-level representatives from countries and international organizations convened in The Hague to come to a shared understanding of the opportunities to strengthen support and commitments for access to justice prior to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the SDG Summit in 2019. Participants explored strategies for the achievement of SDG 16.3 “equal access to justice for all” and discussed opportunities for implementation of innovative models, identified barriers and obstacles to reform, and considered recommendations and potential commitments to deliver on access to justice for all. The Declaration is a result of their discussions.

Published: 2019

- [United States Department of Justice: Objective 3.4: Expand Equal Access to Justice](#)

Summary: The website introduces three strategies the United States Department of Justice proposes to expand equal access to justice including increasing justice system accessibility, accelerating justice system innovation and safeguarding justice system accountability. It also provides key performance indicators to monitor if these objectives are achieved.





Official Statements/Documents issued by Intergovernmental Organizations, Regional & Political Groups

Statements

- [Statements of the 32nd Session of CCPCJ](#)
Summary: The webpage contains links to all statements made during the 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) including Member States, regional groups and all other entities..
Published: 2023
- [Statement of International Development Law Organization at General Assembly High-Level Debate on Equal Access to Justice for All](#)
Summary: The International Development Law Organization is the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively devoted to promoting the rule of law. Its statement generates three observations: firstly, access to justice requires working from the top-down to improve the effectiveness and accountability of justice institutions and make them more accessible and responsive to justice seekers' needs. Secondly, legal empowerment is key to achieving SDG 16 and delivering equal access to justice for all and finally, women and girls face specific barriers in accessing justice.
Published: 2023
- [The Commonwealth Blog: Access to justice for all is not yet a reality – but there are ways forward](#)
Summary: The blog begins by acknowledging that Access to justice for everyone in all communities is an important right and requirement for building fair and peaceful societies – yet this objective has been achieved in few if any nations, and the consequences are damaging for social, economic and political progress and stability.. The Commonwealth makes it a priority to answer the needs of all people, particularly those such as the poor and unemployed, victims of domestic violence, refugees and disabled or First Nation people, whose experience far too often is to feel marginalized or ill-served by judicial processes to remedy the barriers. In addition to laying out the problems that people in marginal and vulnerable groups have in accessing justice, the blog outlines promising solutions to these problems.
Published: 2019



- [The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\) Report on Equal Access to Justice for Inclusive Growth: Putting people at center](#)

Summary: The website illustrates the OECD's efforts to achieve equal access to justice. OECD Public Governance Directorate established a platform for dialogue, the OECD Global Roundtables on Equal Access to Justice, to deepen and further collective understanding of effective people-centered access to justice and the crucial role it plays as a contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth. This report presents the OECD's framework for ensuring that justice pathways and services are responsive to the needs of people.

Published: 2018

Political Groups

- [Statement of European Union at the 32nd session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice \(CCPCJ\)](#)

Summary: Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, this statement affirms that the rule of law is essential for the stability, security and development of our societies and that access to justice for all is a basic principle of the rule of law. It also raises the concern over the increasing digitalization of justice that may put people who, due to, for instance, their age, gender identity, health, disability or low level of digital literacy, are unable to access justice on an equal footing with others.

Published: 2023

- [Statement of the European Union at General Assembly High-Level Debate on Equal Access to Justice for All](#)

Summary: This statement from the European Union calls for a shift from the traditional focus on institutions and the State, to an approach that puts people and their justice needs at the center of justice systems. It emphasizes that in order to regain citizen's trust, increase use of more innovative and accessible tools, such as, the role of digitalisation to improve access to justice. The statement also summarizes other important components that are needed to protect the right of equal access to justice..

Published: 2023





- [Statement of European Union at the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law Third Session](#)

Summary: The statement introduced the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024, in support of the rule of law and the fair administration of justice. The Plan includes support for equal access for all to justice and legal assistance, including by legal aid and digital innovation which is essential not only to protect and empower all individuals, but also to build resilient, inclusive and democratic societies.

Published: 2021

- [Statement by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States: The Rule of Law at National and International Level](#)

Summary: This statement reaffirms CELAC's commitment to the rule of law and to working together for the sake of prosperity for all, emphasizes the right of equal access to justice for all, including members of vulnerable groups and notes the importance of raising awareness of legal rights, including legal aid.

Regional Groups

- [Statement on behalf of the African Group in the Sixth Committee of General Assembly under Agenda Item 83 "Rule of Law at the National and International Levels"](#)

Summary: The statement is aligned with the United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems and highlights the importance of legal aid and capacity building as a key to promoting the rule of law at a national level. .

Published: 2014





Official Documents about the situation in UN Regions or Member-States

- [Equal Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities in China](#)
Summary: This research report focuses on the experience of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in China. It investigated all aspects of accessing justice, from access to legal information, awareness of legal aid, to the use of legal services, taking legal action and the ability to resolve disputes. It presents evidence-based policy recommendations to comprehensively remove the barriers faced by persons with disabilities during legal processes.
Published: 2016
- [UNICEF \(in cooperation with IDLO\): Children's Equitable Access to Justice: Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#)
Summary: The document offers a regional perspective on children's equitable access to justice. They found that in real social practices, children's access was usually overlooked. Three main research findings, including children's justice needs across criminal, civil and administrative settings are inadequately addressed, children and their families know little about child rights and where to seek redress and children face tremendous obstacles in accessing justice and countermeasures of those issues are analyzed.
Published: 2015
- [UNICEF Europe and Central Asia: Access to Justice](#)
Summary: As one of the leading advocates for juvenile justice reform, the UNICEF website focuses on the challenges faced by children in Europe and Central Asia whose pursuit of justice is hampered by a lack of access to equitable and child-friendly justice systems.





Non-Official Resources about the Topic

- [Legal Aid in Criminal Justice System](#)
Summary: This paper examines the ways in which legal aid is provided in India, including through public defenders, private lawyers, and legal aid organizations. It also discusses the challenges that those seeking legal aid face, such as limited resources and geographical barriers, and highlights some innovative solutions that have been developed to address these challenges.
Published: 2023
- [Access to Justice for All Includes Disadvantaged Communities](#)
Summary: In 2022, the effectiveness of civil justice systems fell in over three-fifths of countries around the world, according to the *2022 WJP Rule of Law Index*. That included countries across the Asia Pacific region, where 62% of states suffered setbacks in civil justice. At the end of last year, the [Asia Pacific Justice Forum](#) brought experts from across the region together to discuss justice barriers and share ways in which they are working to create change.
Published: 2023
- [Equal Access to Justice for All: How Will We Know When We Get There?](#)
Summary: This guest article from the International Institute for Sustainable Development highlights that civil justice problems are common and can be most harmful to people who live at the margins of society and urges the members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG), responsible for Sustainable Development Goal indicators to integrate access to civil justice measures should be integrated into the SDGs indicator framework.
Published: 2018
- [Access and Opportunity for All: How libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda](#)
Summary: Libraries are integral to the success of the UN Agenda. Law librarians see upfront how institutions advance access to justice by providing legal aid. Lawyers in law firms offer pro bono legal services, judges and court personnel advance access to justice initiatives, and students in law schools participate in legal aid clinics. Law librarians champion meaningful access to information that helps courts, governments, and other institutions advance justice and legal aid initiatives.
Published: 2015



Non-Official Resources about Member-States or UN Regions

- [Women and access to justice in Africa: Women cannot wait another 100 years](#)
Summary: Many women do not have equitable access to justice and leadership positions. Expanding access to justice for women across Africa and achieving sustainable and equitable access to justice for women requires collective action and the inclusion of all actors—governments, civil society, women, and men. This article explores what governments can do across Africa to change the tide of this impending doom for more than half of their populations.
Published: 2023
- [Civil Society and Access to Justice in Latin America](#)
Summary: This blog from the Wilson Center provides a graph which shows which countries in the region where access to justice has improved for women and where it has gotten worse and provides two case studies to illustrate these two different trends.
Published: 2023
- [Breaking Down Barriers: Access to Justice in Europe for Victims of International Crimes](#)
Summary: This Report examines the extent to which specialised units within the EU that investigate and prosecute serious international crimes uphold EU standards on victims' rights. It is based on research conducted between 2019 and 2020, including approximately 140 interviews with practitioners and policy makers in five Member States—Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. The Report includes an analysis of common challenges and emerging best practices.
Published: 2020
- [Access to justice](#)
Summary: IWRAP Asia Pacific is an NGO dedicated to creating an enabling legal environment for women's access to justice. After pointing out examples where laws and institutions have failed to adequately protect women's rights, they outline their strategies and initiatives to improve women's access to justice.
Published: 2017





**WFUNA International Model United Nations
New York City 2024**

*30 January 2024 - 2 February 2024
Intercontinental Times Square and The Westin Times Square*

wimun@wfuna.org | www.wfuna.org