



UNITED NATIONS CHARTER LIBRARIES

A KNOWLEDGE NETWORK DEDICATED TO PROMOTING THE UN CHARTER AND
ALL ACTIONS EMANATING FROM IT



**United
Nations**

Dag Hammarskjöld Library

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Charter, signed in 1945, sets forth the founding mission and principles of the UN. It promotes cooperation among nations to solve global issues, protect human rights, uphold international law, and advance peace and security. Nearly 80 years later, the values in the Charter remain highly relevant as the world faces complex, interconnected challenges. However, wider awareness and understanding of the Charter itself is limited. A 2019 global survey found only 57% of respondents had heard of the UN Charter. This lack of familiarity undermines the Charter's role as a uniting framework.

Currently, very few libraries globally receive UN print through the historic UN Depository Library programme, while many lack the agility to effectively search and discover electronic UN documents, publications and other UN content from the [United Nations Digital Library](#) and from a plethora of online UN resources. Many struggle to actively share UN digital information, let alone knowledge about the UN Charter. However, over 300 libraries globally already share a historical relationship with the United Nations and its work. By mobilizing these libraries into a knowledge network focused on the UN Charter, and by inviting other libraries and institutions to join, we can collaboratively re-envision the work and nature of partnerships among affiliated libraries with the UN, through this global consultation.

The goal is to widely disseminate resources and knowledge produced by the UN to raise awareness and to contribute to in-depth understanding of the UN Charter which governs the mission and purpose of the UN that consists of the following five principles:

1. Maintain international peace and security
2. Protect human rights
3. Deliver humanitarian aid
4. Promote sustainable development
5. Uphold international law

At minimal cost, the Network would expedite knowledge transfer, foster creative thinking, enhance UN data and information literacy, pursue persistent access to information as an enabler of the UN Charter and the work of the Organization, and build capacity within the Network's user community. With a well-defined structure, governance and active participation, the Network becomes a vibrant platform for libraries to enrich their communities in line with the UN mission. The key is for individual library members to align their goals of knowledge-sharing and community engagement with the UN Charter and mission, while supported by a Network that promotes engaged involvement, encouraging and facilitating members to learn from one another. The knowledge network of UN Charter Libraries will prioritize rewarding for members to exchange knowledge, share practical tips, lessons learned, and suggestions based on their on-the-ground work.



2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1

Flexibility for libraries to participate in ways that meet their needs and capacities. This includes exploring new tiers of membership beyond just selective and regional depositories. It will also include a phased approach to the creation of the UN Charter Libraries Network, so that its development is iterative and sustainable. As the Network grows, there will be defined points of engagement with corresponding actions libraries can take to advance the work of the Organization.

2.2

Prioritizing access, discovery and use of digital content in direct relevance to the principles of the UN Charter is a central theme. Founding libraries of the Network, who may have origins in the Depository Library programme, will facilitate the provision of public access to historic print UN documents and publications, as well as relay and preserve content from the UN Digital Library. Future members may adopt actions such as programming related to UN documents or activities, social media campaigns, library instruction, and, of course, specialized reference services. Preservation, persistent and equitable access to information as well as improved metadata linking UN content to users will remain key focus areas.

2.3

Clear benefits to member libraries and knowledge workers (e.g. certificate of attendance in specialized events), expected contributions, and guidelines for substantive discussions will be provided (see Governance).

2.4

The Network will start small and grow organically. A selected group of libraries will launch the Network after an open global consultation. The group will also draft Terms of Reference of the Network which will be open for feedback by the community. The success of the Network will rely on the quality over quantity of participation in its early stages.

2.5

The Network will ensure cultural diversity and inclusion. With a global membership, it will be critical that the Network provides space for different cultural voices and viewpoints. Facilitators can be assigned from within a geographic region and be charged with fostering inclusive discussions that will be transmitted to the Network's governing body.

3. PLATFORM & TECHNOLOGY

3.1

The Network can leverage technology thoughtfully.

3.2

An intuitive online platform may be employed to enable members to connect easily, engage in cohesive conversations, and harness the collective knowledge of the Network. However, technology will not replace human interaction.

4. NETWORK THEMES

4.1

A concept note outlining the UN Charter Libraries and related Terms of Reference will provide the Network with its substantive purpose, and a framework of potential actions.

4.2

Discussions among members will be facilitated using knowledge-sharing best practices to stimulate creative, experimental thinking and productive exchanges. Within the plethora of actions, some suggestions include the below.

4.2.1

Facilitating community discussions or dialogues where different viewpoints can be shared in a constructive manner: member libraries could help foster understanding between divided groups.

4.2.2

Promoting access to UN information and data: member librarians can curate inclusive collections, encompassing shared print collections, as well as manage programmes on their libraries' digital ecosystem.

4.2.3

Teaching classes on media, information, data literacy, and evaluating sources to promote the dissemination of information about the UN

4.2.4

Modeling inclusive spaces that welcome all members of the community regardless of background: member libraries can promote tolerance and understanding.

4.2.5

Partnering with local organizations to support humanitarian relief, development aid, human rights advocacy etc.: member libraries can serve as connection points.

4.2.6

Advocating for equitable access to information, data and education, within the context of Open Science and Open Educational Resources mandates: member libraries can help overcome divides.

4.3

The Network will host a dedicated conference on themes put forward by the Advisory Group, focusing on the mission and key deliverables of the United Nations.

5. GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

5.1

The UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library will lead the UN Charter Libraries Advisory Group/Committee, which will govern the Network and emanating actions. It will also manage nominations and membership of experts and entities active in knowledge/information management. More details to be provided with the Network's Terms of Reference.

5.2

Each discussion emerging from the governing group will have a dedicated moderator to facilitate constructive dialogue when it branches out to Network members.

5.3

Adequate budget and staffing will support coordination, training, moderation, and other critical functions. This entails engagement from all staff serving in the Partnerships & Publishing Unit.

5.4

The Group will convene as needed, at least bi-monthly.

6. MONITORING & EVALUATION

6.1

Participation metrics, content generated, downloads, and member feedback will be tracked to monitor engagement, productivity, and value.

6.2

Continuous refinement through surveys, user testing, and annual evaluations will ensure the Network achieves its knowledge-sharing goals.

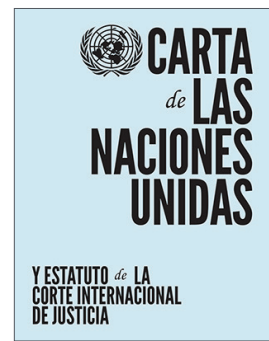
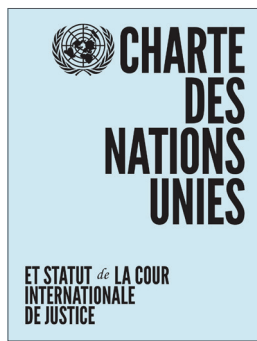
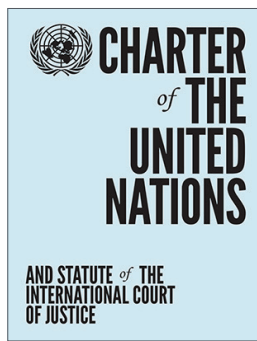
7. CONCLUSION

This is a strategic re-positioning aiming to leverage existing UN Depository Libraries as well as other libraries and institutions into a new, robust, inclusive knowledge network focused on the founding document of the Organization and all the UN actions emanating from it.

With dedicated resources and an inclusive and transparent governance structure and operation, the Network can enable impactful knowledge sharing on UN Charter themes like human rights, sustainable development, peacekeeping and more. The current Depository Library programme is to be phased out as the Network is established.

Creating such a collaborative, multi-stakeholder platform represents a unique opportunity. It has the capacity to mobilize hundreds of libraries globally to expand understanding of the UN Charter as a shared foundation for advancing human rights and the work of the Organization. In doing so, it can substantially contribute to bringing the Charter to life and renew commitment to its enduring vision and values worldwide.

The Network requires careful planning and a long-term perspective to develop a sustainable and enduring community of practice. By sharing knowledge and inspiring dialogue, it can make the UN Charter and all actions emanating from it increasingly accessible and visible. The present document is an initial roadmap toward this goal identified in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library's Strategic Outlook 2024-2028.





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