



Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations

ORIGINAL PROGRAM DATE

October 24, 2025

*Presented in partnership with the
WSBA World Peace Through Law Section*

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DESCRIPTION

What is the role the United Nations can and should play in addressing and solving the world's challenges? How can we measure the success of the UN's missions and programs? Is the UN an antiquated vestige from a different era? The relevance of the UN continues to be a vital question as the world faces continual crises and conflicts. Join us as we tackle these, and other, crucial questions.

AGENDA

1 **The Aarhus Convention and the Continuing Legacy of the UN: Transparency, Access, and Environmental Justice Beyond Borders**

This session introduces the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), including its compliance mechanism, covering the Compliance Committee and its rapid response mechanism in the form of the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders. It will highlight the importance of the Convention in the current international environment and for members of the public outside of Parties to the Convention, such as in the United States of America.

Secretariat Teresa Mayr - United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland

2 **The UN's Contribution to the Development of International Law**

In the 80 years of its existence, the United Nations has been central to the development of an elaborate and dynamic body of international law. This takes the form of multilateral treaties in many areas, some of them approaching universal participation, and customary international law, which is identified in such sources as resolutions of the General Assembly. The UN's primary judicial organ, the International Court of Justice, is in the most dynamic phase of its existence with an unprecedented level of involvement in its proceedings. The sticking point is enforcement of the law, a matter relegated to the Security Council where effective action is often blocked by the veto of its permanent members.

Professor William A. Schabas - Middlesex University, London, UK

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3 The Human Rights Council and Updates

Understand the role and mechanisms of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). We will ask and attempt to answer if it is still fit for purpose.

Anita Ramasastry - University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Randall Winn - World Peace Through Law Section, Seattle, WA

4 The United States' Relationship to and in the UN: Voices at the Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review is a tool the UNHCR uses to provide member states the opportunity to report out on their efforts to improve the status of human rights in their countries and to receive suggestions from fellow members states for improvement.

Alejandra Gonza - University of Washington, Seattle, WA