

What is QUNO?

The Quaker United Nations Office, located in Geneva and New York, represents Quakers through Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). Since the founding of the United Nations in 1945, Quakers have shared that organisation's aims and supported its efforts to abolish war and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts, human rights, economic justice and good governance.

FWCC, which links Quakers around the world, has had consultative status with the United Nations' Economic and Social Council as an international non-governmental organization since 1948. This status allows the QUNO staff to attend many UN meetings, to receive documents and to make written and oral statements. QUNO staff also work with other multilateral organisations, such as the World Trade Organisation, International Labour Organisation, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and others relevant to our areas of concern.

Examples of QUNO's work

By its very nature, much of QUNO's facilitation work goes on behind the scenes, though work on some issues has a more public profile, including:

- ▶ Child soldiers
- ▶ Prevention of violent conflict
- ▶ Protection of refugees
- ▶ Conscientious objection to military service
- ▶ Millennium Development Goals
- ▶ HIV/AIDS
- ▶ Rights of indigenous peoples
- ▶ Intellectual property rights
- ▶ International labour standards
- ▶ Landmines
- ▶ Small arms and light weapons



Quaker United Nations Office

If you would like to know more about QUNO's work, or to subscribe to our newsletters, please visit our website www.quno.org or contact us at:

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Who are the Quakers?

Quakers hold to a way of life rather than a dogma or creed. “Quakers” started as a nickname—they call themselves the Religious Society of Friends or Friends Church—but they are now generally known as Quakers or Friends. The Quaker movement began in England in the 1650s, when its founder, George Fox, gathered together those who sought to live and worship in accordance with the living spirit of Christ. Worldwide, Quakers now number around 340,000, with the majority in Africa and the Americas. As part of its worldwide religious witness, this small group of people maintains two offices, in Geneva and New York. They work with the UN system on a wide range of issues, linking international policy goals with grassroots perspectives.

Quakers aim to live simply and truthfully, working for a more just, equitable and peaceful world. Their commitment to non-violence in thought, word and deed is based on living out the word of God, as known in the life and teachings of Jesus, as well as from the word of God known in their own hearts and demonstrated in the lives of others. It can be described, in the words of the early Quaker leader George Fox, as “answering that of God in every one”, or as seeking the inward light in each person. The Quaker faith is rooted in Christianity. Many Friends have learned from the witness of other faiths. Friends work with other religious and secular organisations both locally and internationally.

How does QUNO work?

As well as representing Quakers at the UN, QUNO facilitates dialogue and works on specific issues.

Work priorities are based on the concerns of Quakers worldwide and determined, in part, by the agendas of the organisations with which QUNO works. The QUNO staff draw on the expertise of Quaker individuals and organizations.

Quakers engaged in international affairs have a long tradition of providing opportunities for people to meet on an equal footing. Such informal and off-the-record meetings, away from the pressures of public life, provide a setting for dialogue where the voices of delegations from all countries may attain equal weight and importance. These meetings encourage a greater understanding of why there are disagreements and provide an opportunity to challenge assumptions between groups, who would not otherwise have the chance to talk openly. Participants may try to find common ground or to explore difficult, controversial or sensitive issues. Staff both initiate and respond to requests for these meetings, which are held at the Quaker Houses maintained for this purpose in Geneva and New York.

Quakers are also known for speaking out against injustice and war—issues that are incompatible with their vision of a world in which peace and justice prevail. QUNO staff work with people in the UN, multilateral organisations, government delegations and non-governmental organizations to achieve changes in international law and practice.

How can I support the work of QUNO Geneva?

QUNO Geneva welcomes donations to help cover the cost of its work.

Please send your contribution to:

Britain Yearly Meeting/ Quaker UN Office
UBS SA

Case Postale 2600,
CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Swiss Franc Account no: 279-C0-142149.0

US Dollar Account no: 279-HU-149409.1

Britain Yearly Meeting
The Cooperative Bank
62-64 Southampton Row,
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Sorting code number 08-90-61

Pound Sterling Account no: 50234651