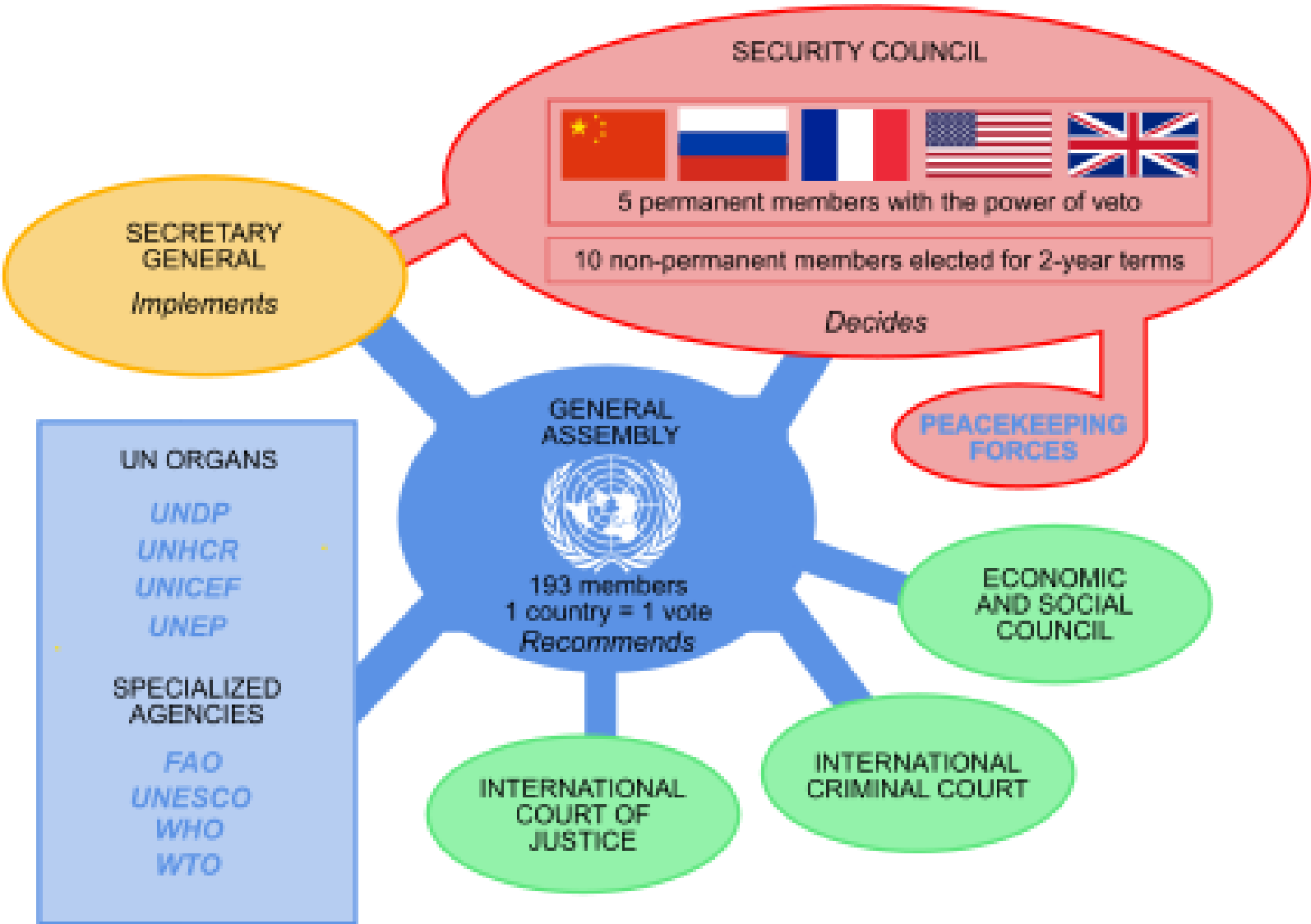


The Role of Congregations of Religious at the UN



Catholic Religious NGO Presence at the UN

- In the UN system, we are considered NGOs (non-governmental organizations)
- ~30 NGOs accredited to represent over 200 Catholic Religious congregations



What does it mean to be accredited?

Accreditation allows NGOs to participate in UN proceedings by:

- Making oral statements
- Submitting written statements
- Meeting with diplomats
- Participating in UN conferences
- Sponsoring events inside and near UN Headquarters
- Making formal or informal recommendations on new UN agreements as they are being negotiated
- Submitting reports and comments on nations' progress on human rights (or lack thereof)

Religious Voice at the UN

- **Credible:** provide insights from members' work ministering to the poorest and most vulnerable populations "on the ground"
- **Impartial:** represent communities that span many nations and have no national identity
- **Rooted in morals/values:** known for deep, personal and communal dedication to care for human dignity of all and for the natural environment
- **Steady and stable:** maintain positions based on constitutions and principles older than UN and many nations; bring continuity and cohesion that governments with frequently changing leaders/politics cannot

**The Mission of the UN
&
the Prophetic Call of Religious Life**



THE UN CHARTER:

WE, THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, DETERMINED

- to **save succeeding generations from the scourge of war**, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to **reaffirm faith** in fundamental human rights, in the **dignity and worth of the human person**, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to **establish** conditions under which **justice** and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote **social progress and better standards of life** in larger freedom,

THE UN CHARTER:

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and **live together in peace with one another as good neighbours**, and
- to unite our strength to **maintain international peace** and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the **promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples...**

SDGs: SECULAR ROAD MAP to the REIGN OF GOD?



The POLITICAL is SPIRITUAL

“It is important to realize that there is an element of spirituality needed in what we do...”

Stop the trend of dividing humanity to ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The most important word in the world is **TOGETHER.**”

-H.E. Jan Eliasson
former UN Deputy Secretary General

The POLITICAL is SPIRITUAL

“The United Nations and its agencies deal with a comprehensive range of issues affecting global communities, including human rights, population, food, agriculture, health, trade and children. For each of these issues, **religion often plays a powerful complementary moral, social, economic and political role for disenfranchised communities.**

Every religious tradition has leaders and networks providing food distribution, health care, education and conflict mediation. **Religious social service networks, which preceded the UN and governmental entities, reach more people and are more deeply entrenched than any other organization.”**

-Dr. Azza Karam (former Senior Advisor of UN Population Fund) &
Dr. Matt Weiner (Associate Dean of Princeton University's Office of Religious Life)

The POLITICAL is SPIRITUAL

“**Politics**, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and **one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good**...be courageous and do not be afraid, in political and economic projects, to allow yourselves to be influenced by a broader meaning of life as this will help you to truly serve the common good and will give you strength in ‘striving to increase the goods of this world and to make them more accessible to all’”.

-Pope Francis

to business leaders, Feb. 7, 2015

THE SPIRITUAL IS POLITICAL

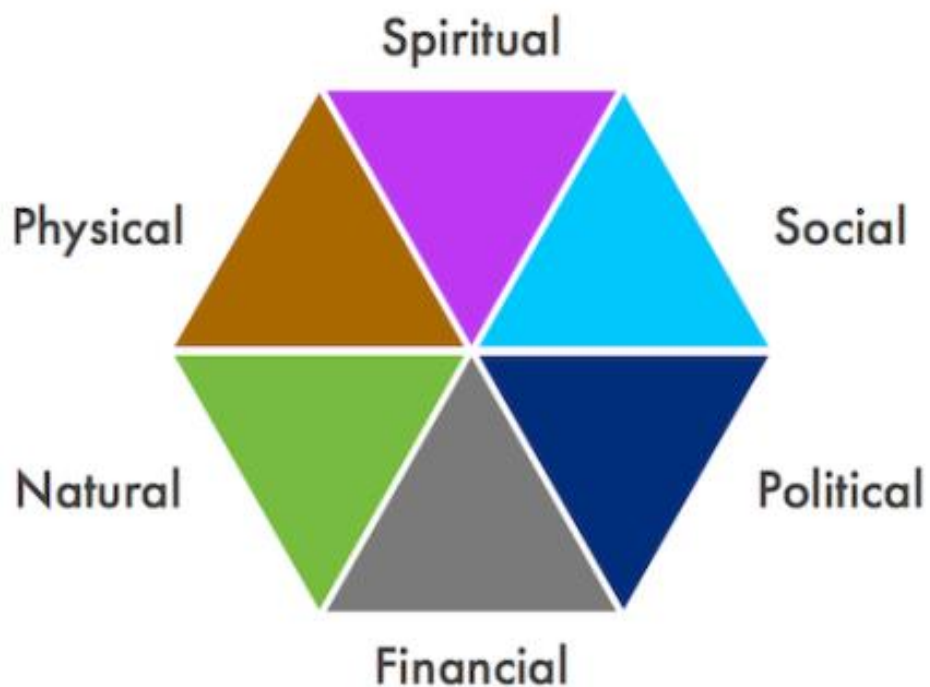
People of faith are called not only to counteract unjust politics and economics through charitable works but also to *transform* those unjust systems to eradicate the suffering that demands charity.

“Not to **enable the poor to share in our goods** is to steal from them and deprive them of life.

The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs. The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; **that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.**”

-St. John Chrysostom (Quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446)

The SPIRITUAL is INTEGRAL to all DIMENSIONS of DEVELOPMENT



“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.

Strategies for a solution demand an integral approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and, at the same time, protecting nature.”

-Pope Francis (*Laudato Si'*, 139)