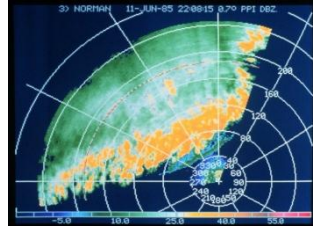


# U.S. MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT: BENEFITS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS



*"...the time has come for the world to move in a new direction. We must embrace a new era of engagement based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and our work must begin now."*

*-- President Barack Obama*

The United States is deeply engaged with the United Nations and other international organizations to promote U.S. national interests. While most Americans are familiar with U.S. leadership at the United Nations as part of the Security Council and as a leading voice in support of human rights, economic development, and humanitarian relief, fewer Americans are aware of the many benefits that stem from U.S. engagement with the many technical and specialized international organizations.

A few of those benefits include:

## **AVIATION SAFETY**

Every day throughout the world, thousands of commercial, cargo, and other aircraft span the skies on international flights. As a result of standards and recommended practices established and governed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), international flights are handled in a uniform manner from takeoff to landing. Founded in 1947 under the Chicago Convention, ICAO is dedicated to safe, secure, and sustainable development of civil aviation through cooperation among its 190 Member States, including the United States. ICAO's standardized procedures enhance technical and operational aspects of international civil aviation, including safety, security, air traffic services, training and technical assistance, and environmental matters.

## **CLIMATE AND WEATHER FORECASTING**

U.S. support for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) promotes international cooperation on improved hurricane forecasting, natural disaster preparedness, climate issues, and the exchange of vital atmospheric and oceanic data. These data allow the U.S. National Weather Service to better forecast severe weather and better serve the forecasting needs of civil aviation, marine navigation, industry, and agriculture. The United States has been a member of WMO for more than 60 years.

## **GLOBAL HEALTH**

Today's major health challenges know no borders. Whether discussing pandemic influenza, malaria, HIV/AIDS, polio, improving child and maternal health, or strengthening health systems around the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) has a crucial role to play. Established in 1948, WHO provides leadership on global health matters by establishing norms and standards, monitoring and assessing health trends, and providing technical assistance when and where needed. The United States works closely with WHO to support effective responses to public health challenges. One element of those efforts is WHO's International Health Regulations, which provide an improved and coordinated framework for dealing with global public health events.

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## GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

Since the first International Telegraph Convention was signed in 1865, the world community has adopted a cooperative approach to the development and coordination of new communication tools. As the telegraph gave way to telephonic and radio communication, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) was born to coordinate international standards of electronic communication. That role continues today through ITU's management of global radio frequencies for broadcasting, mobile phones, satellites, wireless internet, and disaster operations.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized UN agency charged with developing and maintaining the international intellectual property system under a regime of several international treaties. This system supports the protection of intellectual property rights, which in turn encourages creativity, innovation, and economic development. WIPO's services include facilitating applications for international patents, copyrights, and registration of trademarks and designs, as well as technical assistance and training. The United States is an active member of WIPO, and believes its services are of significant benefit to Americans and American business.

## SHIPPING AND MARITIME SAFETY

More than 45,000 merchant ships currently ply the seas, carrying the vast bulk of products and commodities traded in the world economy. Guiding the shipping industry is the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is responsible for the industry's regulatory framework including safety and environmental standards, security, legal issues, and efficiency. IMO treaties, standards, and guidelines have significant benefits for American business, and directly serve U.S. national security by applying security requirements to foreign vessels entering U.S. ports.

## INTERNATIONAL MAIL

Every year, post offices around the world handle in excess of 400 billion letters and packages. The legal and procedural framework for the global postal system is provided and overseen by the Universal Postal Union (UPU). This UN specialized agency, now more than 130 years old, sets the guidelines for international mail exchanges and makes recommendations to stimulate growth in mail volume and to improve the quality of service for customers. The global network of mail service governed by the UPU ensures that Americans can communicate by mail with friends, family, customers, and colleagues in all corners of the world.