

Prior to 1971 the United Nations affairs were handled, from 1945 to 1948, by the (now defunct) First Political Division which--inter alia--looked after Canada's multi-lateral relations and thereafter, by a United Nations Division when the Department was separated from the Office of the Prime Minister and organized under its own Minister.

The U.N. Affairs Bureau also has functional and line management responsibilities for the two U.N. Permanent Missions, at New York and Geneva. The Missions exist to maximize the opportunities that the U.N. and its system of organizations provide for the advancement and protection of Canadian interests through debate and multilateral negotiations. They are heavily involved in articulating Canada's positions, and lead or support its overall negotiating effort. They take responsibility for formally presenting Canada's positions at all U.N. bodies (exclusive of some specialized agencies) and for the success of negotiations that take place.

The Missions are given some latitude for dealing with unforeseen concerns as they emerge; the Bureau, however, is responsible for coordinating government policy and guidelines and for providing direction for the Missions' activities. In the context of program evaluation, the two U.N. Missions may be regarded as the "delivery" end of the United Nations Affairs program component.

The United Nations, with representation from almost every nation on the globe, is the world's principal centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. As the parent in the United Nations family of organizations, the United Nations Headquarters in New York is the world's most nearly universal and most important multilateral forum which brings together each fall at the beginning of the General Assembly Heads of Government or Foreign Ministers from the 152 Member States. The annual General Assembly provides an unparalleled opportunity for nations to express political views and to expose their leaders and decision-makers to the views of others. Through the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, the priorities and objectives of the Organization and all of its dependent agencies and committees are established.