APA AT THE UNITED NATIONS – 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Background

Accreditation

APA is an accredited nongovernmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations (UN) where it holds special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is officially associated with the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC).

Representatives

APA supports representatives in New York and Geneva:

New York	Geneva (co-organized with the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) and the Federation of Swiss Psychologists (FSP))
• Irina Feygina, PhD (Lead Representative) • Natalie Rykiel, MSc, MA (Associate Representative) • Kim Baranowski, PhD, ABPP (term ends 2029) • Michelle Bell, PsyD (term ends 2025) • Monique Bowen, PhD (terms ends 2030) • Deborah Fish Ragin, PhD (term ends 2030) • Heidi Kar, PhD (term ends 2029) • Moshood Olanrewaju, PhD (term ends 2029) • Brittany Sellers, PhD (term ends 2030)	• Tobias Brosch, PhD (term ends 2028) • Gilles Chatelain, PhD (term ends 2030) • Odile Frank, ScD (term ends 2029) • Swen Kuhne, PhD (term ends 2030)

Structure within APA

APA staff are also engaged at the UN, particularly the Senior Director for International Affairs, Amanda Clinton, PhD, and the Senior International Affairs Officer, Gabriel Twose, PhD, who serves as the Association's Main Representative to the UN. Drs. Clinton and Twose aid volunteers in creating a UN advocacy strategy and coordinate the representatives in New York and Geneva, ensuring they are linked to the rest of APA to benefit from available resources. Other staff in the Public Interest, Science, and Practice segments of the Central Office participate in UN activities on an ad-hoc basis.

The UN teams report through the APA Committee for Global Psychology (CGP). Irina Feygina, PhD, Lead UN Representative in New York, attended CGP meetings and John Francis Leader, PhD, 2024 CGP liaison to the UN: New York team, attended UN meetings. Drs. Feygina and Leader ensured effective coordination and planning to maximize communication and impact.

Engagement and Accomplishments on Strategic Priorities

APA's Representatives and staff bring psychological science to bear on the multilateral development agenda of the UN and its Member States by fostering dialogue and information exchange among APA, UN agencies, and Member State representatives. The team educates and raises awareness on the value of psychological science and works toward concrete outcomes, such as the passage of psychologically-informed resolutions, reports, and other outcome documents.

APA's work at the UN primarily promotes Strategic Goals: 1) Utilize psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues, and 2) Elevate the public's understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology, as well as the Operating Principle to Embrace a global perspective.

This annual report will briefly summarize some of APA's major engagements and accomplishments at the UN in 2025 in the priority areas of global mental health, climate change/sustainability, and stigma/discrimination, as well as other activities that do not fit into these primary categories.

Global Mental Health

Much of APA's work at the United Nations in 2025 revolved around a Political declaration on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being, which acknowledges the global importance of prioritizing mental health in order to advance individual and communal well-being and economic growth. Governments commit to promoting integrated primary and community-based care, improving youth mental health, implementing measures to prevent suicide, and addressing social and environmental determinants of mental health. The Political Declaration was adopted in December, 2025.

In late April/early May, APA and the Global Psychology Alliance (GPA; convened by APA) joined the Global Mental Health Action Network leading up to and during the Multi-stakeholder Hearing on Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health in preparation for a High-Level Meeting and Political Declaration at the General Assembly in September. UN Representatives Irina Feygina, PhD, Natalie Rykiel, MS, Kim Baranowski, PhD, Debby Fish-Ragin, PhD, and Monique Bowen, PhD, along with GPA member Alfredo Padilla Lopez, PhD, met with the Permanent Missions to the United Nations from Mexico, Chile, Peru, Ukraine, and the European Union to highlight the importance of topics such as social determinants of health, youth mental health, suicide prevention, and service reform. Team members also spoke at or attended events organized by New York University, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization. APA's intervention at the May 2 Multistakeholder Hearing, provided by Dr. Baranowski, can be seen on UNWebTV beginning at 2:21.

In May, UN-Geneva Representative Odile Frank, ScD, participated in a panel at the World Health Assembly organized by the Global Mental Health Action Network and the World Federation of Public Health Associations addressing the social and commercial determinants of mental health. Speakers explained that mental health is profoundly shaped by the circumstances in which we are born, grow up, work, live and age. To create a society where everybody can thrive, we need the right building blocks in place such as stable jobs, good pay, quality housing, good education, and adequate protection from environmental harms to health. Dr. Frank's presentation emphasized: the deleterious impact of poverty on psychological well-being and the means to prevent it; the harmful effects of compartmentalized

knowledge structures; and reflections on the balance between empathy and wealth maximization in the multilateral development agenda. A short video clip about the World Health Assembly panel can be seen here.

In July, APA organized a virtual side event at the 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Chaired by Debby Fish Ragin, PhD, and cohosted with the Permanent Missions to the UN from Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Qatar, the World Health Organization, and the GPA, speakers explained several important mental health-focused initiatives at the United Nations including: (1) the General Assembly resolution on mental health and psychosocial support, (2) the High-Level Meeting and political declaration on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being, and (3) the 2025 Voluntary National Reviews, which incorporate Sustainable Development Goal 3 on good health and wellbeing. View the event recording on Zoom.

Through the summer, APA UN representatives and members of the Psychology Coalition at the UN partnered with the GPA to organize meetings between leaders of national psychology associations and the UN missions from their countries. Psychologists explained the importance of mental health in their countries and successfully urged the UN missions to support the resolution. Meetings were held with the missions from Australia, Chile, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Kuwait, Nepal, New Zealand, Peru, and Zimbabwe, with many other national psychological associations sending letters with the same requests.

Additionally, throughout 2025, Dr. Frank collaborated with the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors to advocate around the Doha Political Declaration that was finalized at the November World Summit for Social Development. Due in part to civil society advocacy, the Political Declaration advances the agenda for mental health, specifying, "Promoting and improving mental health services as an essential component of universal health coverage." More generally, the Doha Declaration mainstreams the importance of social protection, a vital social determinant of health, as a key component of social development.

Climate change/sustainability

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

APA sent member representatives to the two primary United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conferences: Sára Ritter attended the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB62) in June in Bonn, Germany, which is the smaller more technical precursor to COP. Ms. Ritter met with policymakers and civil society actors to educate them about the value of psychological science, particularly discussing the importance of human behavior and emotions in motivating sustainable, just, and effective climate action – including mitigation, adaptation, and transition.

Graciella Faico, PhD, attended the COP30 Climate Change Conference in Belem, Brazil, where she networked with policymakers, practitioners, and others to ensure that psychological science relevant to

climate change mitigation and adaptation was disseminated as widely as possible, magnified by several media interviews. Additionally, Dr. Faico participated in the following side events:

- Climate adaptation to protect mental health and psychological resilience: From evidence to practice
- Psychology of Mutirão: Collective intelligence for ambitious and just climate governance
- Urban planning policy to boost equity, mobility, and physical and mental health in the context of climate change

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

APA successfully nominated Rui Gaspar, PhD to serve as an author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 7th Assessment Report, a comprehensive assessment of scientific, technical, and socio-economic knowledge on climate change, its impacts, and future risks to inform global policymakers. Dr. Gaspar will work on the chapter on "Vulnerabilities, impacts and risks." Tobias Brosch, PhD, an APA Representative to the UN in Geneva was also successfully nominated by the Swiss government to serve as an IPCC author. Drs. Gaspar and Brosch attended their first in-person IPCC meeting in Paris in December.

Stigma/discrimination

In March, APA submitted comments to the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism explaining how professional organizations can advance human rights by integrating an intersectional perspective and addressing how various personal identities intersect with race to shape experiences of discrimination and inequity. The comments showed how APA has utilized policies, guidelines, and advocacy to advance intersectional human rights. For example, the apology to people of color, the Racial Equity Action Plan, the Resolution on the role of psychology in dismantling systemic racism, the multicultural guidelines, and the Diversity Matrix advance the objectives of the UN guidance on intersectionality, racial discrimination, and the protection of minorities. APA's comments may be included in a report or website content created by the Special Rapporteur on the topic of intersectionality.

In November, APA staff delivered sessions on racism and mental health at the UN Office in Geneva. Kelley Haynes-Mendez, PsyD, APA's Senior Director for Human Rights delivered a "master class" on racism and mental health for participants in the 2025 UN Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent in Geneva. The Fellowship was launched in 2011 by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights Anti-Racial Discrimination Section, and later reinforced by General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/16, which outlines the Programme of Activities for implementing the International Decade for People of African Descent. The master class explored how racism affects mental health and offered evidence-based psychological strategies for wellbeing. APA's contribution supported the development of emerging human rights leaders and reflected APA's strategic commitment to applying psychological science to advance racial equity, human rights, and wellbeing across the globe.

Alongside Sophie Kripp, APA's Program Manager for Human Rights, Dr. Haynes-Mendez also co-facilitated a reflection-based session for UN staff in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Anti-Racial Discrimination Section, offering a psychologically grounded space to examine the interpersonal, emotional, and structural dimensions of antiracism work. The session supported the wellbeing of staff who carry demanding human rights mandates and demonstrated how psychological science can be used by leaders of anti-racial discrimination policy efforts. This collaboration reflects APA's commitment to cultural humility and evidence-based practice and laid the foundation for future engagements supporting the UN's antiracism initiatives.

Also in November, APA staff from the Office of International Affairs, Public Interest, and Advocacy prepared and submitted comments in response to the call for input from the 37th session of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGEPAD), focused on *Crossings and Journeys: People of African Descent in Global Migration and the Enduring Architecture of Racialization.* Comments highlighted APA science and policy focused on the psychological impact of family separation, as well as the fear of deportation and harassment from law enforcement within the context of immigration.

Other

WHO Civil Society Commission

Launched in 2023, the WHO Civil Society Commission (CSC) aims to provide recommendations and facilitate structured input from civil society to support WHO's work toward "health for all" and the achievement of health-related Sustainable Development Goals. APA joined the CSC in January 2024, which has now become a global health policy network of more than 500 civil society organizations. Membership in the CSC provides APA with opportunities to share psychological science within multilateral health policy spaces and to contribute as a trusted source of policy expertise in global health dialogues. In 2025, APA staff from the Human Rights Team engaged in several key CSC activities, including the Commission's Annual General Meeting—where WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus emphasized the importance of civil society partnerships in advancing global health - and participating in a CSC networking breakfast during the 2025 World Health Assembly. APA staff contributed to a comprehensive response to the WHO Human Rights Unit within the Gender, Rights, Equity, and Diversity (GRED) Department to inform guidance on applying a human rights-based approach to health, improving the likelihood of psychological science being integrated into global health equity frameworks.