

HMDC Presents... SOCHUM: Quick Guide

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Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM): Role of Non-Governmental Organizations, Foreign Aid and Local Institutions

WHAT WE ARE DEBATING

Rich countries send help, called foreign aid, to poorer countries. Much of it reaches people through NGOs, which are groups outside any government. We debate who should receive aid money and how NGOs can work with local governments, hospitals and community groups. In 2025, donors made the deepest aid cuts in history, so we must help people with less money.

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

1. **Making local institutions stronger:** Our chairs want NGOs to help communities and leave local groups stronger than before.
2. **Helping countries stand alone:** Aid should help a country grow for a long time, so it does not need outside help forever.
3. **Writing a plan together:** We write a plan for helping countries grow that "promotes efficiency and sustainability," which means it saves money and keeps working.

FIVE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

1. **23.1 percent:** Government aid fell this much in 2025, the largest drop in history. (OECD, April 2026)
2. **25 percent:** In 2016, the world promised this share of humanitarian money to local groups. (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, May 7, 2024)
3. **4.3 percent:** Only this share of humanitarian money went directly to local groups in 2025. (ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System 2026, September 10, 2026)
4. **0.5 percent:** In 2023, groups based in developing countries received only this share of aid sent through civil society. (OECD, June 10, 2025)
5. **55 percent:** UN pooled funds gave this share to local and national NGOs in 2025, a record. (OCHA, December 26, 2025)

WHAT THE UN HAS ALREADY DONE

1. **UN Charter, Article 71 (1945):** It lets the Economic and Social Council ask NGOs for advice.
2. **A/RES/46/182 (1991):** It created the system the UN still uses to organize emergency help.

3. **ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 (1996):** It sets the rules for how NGOs can speak at the UN.
4. **A/RES/70/1 (2015):** It adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, which ask governments to work with citizen groups.
5. **S/RES/2730 (2024):** It calls on countries to protect aid workers.

THE MAIN SOLUTIONS

1. **Localization:** We give local groups more money and more power to make decisions.
 - Help: Local groups know the people, cost less, and stay after others leave.
 - Harm: Small groups struggle with donor paperwork and face more danger.
2. **Pooled funds:** Many donors put money into one pot, and the UN gives grants from it to many NGOs.
 - Help: The UN handles the paperwork, so small local groups can receive money.
 - Harm: The UN becomes a middleman, which adds cost.
3. **Cash assistance:** Aid groups give people money or vouchers to buy what they need in local shops.
 - Help: More of each dollar reaches the person, and local shops benefit.
 - Harm: Cash does not work where shops have closed or prices rise very fast.
4. **Working through national governments:** Aid flows through the government, so public hospitals and schools grow stronger.
 - Help: Public hospitals and schools stay after NGOs leave.
 - Harm: Some governments steal aid money or fight their own people.

WHERE THE MAJOR BLOCS STAND

1. **United States:** It cut aid sharply in 2025 and closed USAID.
2. **European Union:** It is the largest humanitarian donor and supports local groups, cash and pooled funds.
3. **Russian Federation:** It uses a "foreign agent" law at home and opposes punishments that one country puts on another alone.
4. **Group of 77 and China:** This largest group of developing countries asks the world to act before disasters strike.
5. **African Union:** It wants "African solutions to African problems" through its own humanitarian agency.

KEY WORDS IN OUR TOPIC

1. **NGO:** When we say NGO, we mean a group outside any government that usually does not seek profit.
2. **localization:** When we say localization, we mean moving aid money and decisions toward groups from the country being helped.
3. **local institutions:** When we say local institutions, we mean local governments, hospitals and community groups.

4. **pooled fund:** When we say pooled fund, we mean one pot of money from many donors, shared by the UN.
5. **official development assistance:** When we say official development assistance, we mean aid governments give to help poorer countries grow.
6. **intermediary:** When we say intermediary, we mean a large NGO or UN agency that passes donor money to a local partner.
7. **civic space:** When we say civic space, we mean the freedom of people and groups to organize and speak.
8. **foreign agent law:** When we say foreign agent law, we mean a law that makes groups funded from abroad register as foreign-funded.

QUESTIONS WE CAN ASK IN DEBATE

1. Only 4.3 percent of humanitarian money reaches local groups directly, so who will check that the 25 percent promise is kept?
2. How does our plan help a country need less outside help each year?
3. Should aid go through a government that is at war with part of its own people?
4. How can donors stop fraud without burying small local groups in paperwork?

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