



Financing the United Nations and Switzerland's contributions

The activities of the UN are financed through the member states' assessed (compulsory) and voluntary contributions. In **2019, Switzerland paid CHF 104.4 million in assessed contributions**, i.e. annual contributions to the core UN resulting from membership in the organisation: CHF 72.9 million for peacekeeping operations, CHF 30.5 million for the regular budget, and CHF 950'000 for the UN tribunals.

The UN General Assembly negotiates and adopts various budgets:

Regular budget

Operating, personnel and programme costs of the **core UN bodies** (General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Secretariat, International Court of Justice). The budget for 2020 amounts to USD 3.07 billion.

Budgets for peacekeeping operations

Operating, personnel and programme costs of 13 **peacekeeping missions** that are currently deployed with over 95'000 staff. The missions deployed by mandates of the Security Council fluctuate considerably in number and size. The total budget for the budget period 1 July 2019 to June 2020 amounts to USD 6.5 billion.

Budgets of the UN tribunals

The budget of the **UN tribunals** covers the costs of the international residual mechanism for the ad hoc criminal tribunals. The two temporary tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were financed from this budget until they were closed at the end of 2017 and end of 2015, respectively.

Over the past five years, Switzerland has made the following **assessed contributions** (in Swiss francs)¹:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Regular budget	25'569'919	27'093'572	28'754'104	27'710'060	30'487'861
Peacekeeping missions ²	46'679'217	82'276'108	76'746'788	77'352'813	72'975'191
Tribunals	1'751'447	686'867	1'208'359	1'019'218	953'127
Total	74'000'583	110'056'547	106'709'251	106'082'091	104'416'179

¹ Source: state financial statements of the Confederation.

² The fluctuations in the amounts of the contributions for peacekeeping missions are mainly attributable to the three different cycles on which the assessment of the contributions is based. The first factor to be considered is the rate set by the UN for each country for a three-year period. Switzerland's rate for the 2019-21 period is 1.151%. Second, the contributions for peacekeeping missions are set for periods starting on 1 July and ending on 30 June of the following year. Third, the Swiss budget year corresponds to the calendar year. These three overlapping cycles require Switzerland to plan three different budgets for which coverage requests are made in three stages, each over a total period of three years: for 18 months in 2013, 12 months in 2014 and only 6 months in 2015. Since 2016, fluctuations have been smoothed in the state financial statements through deferrals.

Assessed contributions paid by the member states are determined by a **scale of assessments** set by the General Assembly which is applicable for three years (currently: 2019–21). The basis for determining the scale of assessments is primarily the GDP of the various member states; other factors such as the level of indebtedness are also taken into account. The contribution rates have a ceiling of 22% and a lower limit of 0.001% for the least developed countries. The financing of peacekeeping operations is based on the scale of assessments for contributions to the regular budget with the difference that the five permanent members of the Security Council pay a higher share, and the least developed countries have a correspondingly lower share to contribute. Switzerland currently pays 1.151% of the UN budget and ranks 18th in the list of contributors to the UN's regular budget and 14th among contributors to the UN's peacekeeping operations budget.

In 2019 the following 10 states paid the highest **shares to the UN's regular budget**:

	Country	Rate (%)	Contribution (USD)
1	United States	22,000	674'206'698
2	China	12.005	334'726'585
3	Japan	8.564	238'783'713
4	Germany	6.090	169'802'990
5	United Kingdom	4.567	127'338'301
6	France	4.427	123'434'785
7	Italy	3.307	92'206'648
8	Brasi	2.948	82'196'915
9	Canada	2.734	76'230'111
10	Russia	2.405	67'056'845
18	Switzerland	1,151	32'092'485
	Total of all member states	100,000	2'849'023'329

Budgets of the specialised UN agencies

The member states also pay assessed contributions to cover the operating and personnel costs of the **UN specialised agencies** (WHO, ILO, UNESCO, etc.). These are levied directly by the agencies themselves. The specialised UN agencies have budgetary mechanisms that are clearly separate from the General Assembly. Their budgets are generally negotiated by member states every two years.

In addition to the assessed contributions, **voluntary contributions** are the other important source of income. They constitute a substantial part of the overall contribution paid by member states to the entire UN system.

Budgets of UN funds and programmes

Voluntary contributions are particularly important for the **funds and programmes of the UN** (like the UNHCR, the UNDP and UNICEF). They are either general in nature, i.e. regular contributions based on a payment commitment, or contributions tied to specific projects.

In total, Switzerland contributed approximately CHF 779 million in assessed and voluntary contributions to the UN system in 2018³.

³ The website of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provides a comprehensive overview of the total contributions paid by the various member states to the UN system (assessed and voluntary contributions): www.unsceb.org/content/FS-D00-02.