

# United Nations



The United Nations (UN) is an international organization whose stated aims are to facilitate cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, and social progress and human rights issues.

The United Nations was founded in 1945 to replace the League of Nations, in the hope that it would intervene in conflicts between nations and thereby avoid war. The organization began with fifty countries signing the United Nations Charter. The organization's structure still reflects in some ways the circumstances of its founding. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council, each of which has veto power on any Security Council resolution, are the main victors of World War II or their successor states (alphabetical order): the People's Republic of China (which replaced the Republic of China in 1971); France; Russia (which replaced the Soviet Union in 1991); the United Kingdom; and the United

States.<sup>[1]</sup>

There are currently 193 United Nations member states , encompassing almost every recognized independent state. From its headquarters in New York City, the UN and its specialized agencies decide on substantive and administrative issues in regular meetings held throughout each year. The organization is divided into administrative bodies, including the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Secretariat, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Additional bodies deal with the governance of all other UN System agencies, such as the World Health Organization

(WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The UN's most visible public figure is the Secretary-General. The current Secretary-General is Antonio Guterres of Portugal , who assumed the post on 1 January 2017.

It provides the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests when addressing international problems. Toward these ends it ratified a Universal United Nations Aims :

The stated aims of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and security, to safeguard human rights, to provide a mechanism for international law, and to promote social and economic progress, improve living standards and fight diseases. Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.[3]

Wartime poster of the United Nations :

The United Nations was founded as a successor to the League of Nations, which was widely considered to have been ineffective in its role as an international governing body, in that it had been unable to prevent World War II. Some argue that the UN's major advantage over the League of Nations is its ability to maintain and deploy its member nations' armed forces as peace keepers. Others see such "peace keeping" as a euphemism for war and domination of weak and poor countries by the wealthy and powerful nations of the world .

The idea for the UN was espoused in declarations signed at the wartime Allied conferences in Moscow, Cairo, and Tehran

in 1943 . From August to October 1944, representatives of France, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union met to elaborate the plans at the Dumbarton Oaks Estate in Washington, DC. Those and later talks produced proposals outlining the purposes of the organization, its membership and organs, and arrangements to maintain international peace and security and international economic and social cooperation.

On 25 April 1945, the UN Conference on International Organizations began in San Francisco. In addition to the governments, a number of non-governmental organizations were invited to assist in drafting the charter. The 50 nations represented at the conference signed the Charter of the United Nations two months later on 26 June.

The UN came into existence on 24 October 1945, after the Charter had been ratified by the five permanent members of the Security Council—the Republic of China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and by a majority of the other 46 signatories.

### **United Nations Membership**

With the addition of South Sudan on 14 July 2011, there are 193 United Nations member states, including virtually all internationally-recognized independent states.

Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

—United Nations Charter, Chapter 2, Article 4,

United Nations Financing :

The UN is financed from assessed and voluntary contributions from member states.

### **United Nations Languages**

The UN has six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.<sup>[12]</sup> Five of the official languages were chosen when the UN was founded (the languages of the permanent members of the Security Council, plus Spanish, which was the official language of the largest number of nations at the time). Arabic was added in 1973; the number of Arabic-speaking member states had increased substantially since 1945, and the 1973 oil crisis provided the catalyst for the addition. The Secretariat uses two working languages, English and French.

### **Organizational structure**

The United Nations system is based on five principal organs (formerly six - the Trusteeship Council suspended operations in 1994).

#### **1. General Assembly**

The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. It is composed of all United Nations member states and meets in regular yearly sessions under a president elected from among the member states. At the start of each session all members have the opportunity to address the assembly over a two-week period. Traditionally, the Secretary General makes the first statement, followed by the president of the assembly. The first session was convened on 10 January 1946 in the Westminster Central Hall in London and included representatives of 51 nations.

When the General Assembly votes on important questions, a two-thirds majority of those present and voting is required. Examples of important questions include:

- recommendations on peace and security;
- election of members to organs;
- admission, suspension, and expulsion of members;
- And, budgetary matters.

All other questions are decided by majority vote. Each member country has one vote. Apart from approval of budgetary matters, resolutions are not binding on the members. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security that are under Security Council consideration. The one state, one vote power structure theoretically allows states comprising just eight percent of the world population to pass a resolution by a two-thirds vote.

## 2. Security Council

The UN Security Council is charged with maintaining peace and security among nations. While other organs of the United Nations only make recommendations to member governments, the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member governments must carry out under the United Nations Charter. The decisions of the Council are known as United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

The Security Council is made up of 15 member states, consisting of five permanent seats and ten temporary seats. The permanent five are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. These members hold veto power over substantive but not procedural resolutions allowing a permanent member to block adoption but not debate of a resolution unacceptable to it. The ten temporary seats are held for two-year terms with member states voted in by the UN General Assembly on a regional basis. The presidency of the Security Council is rotated alphabetically each month.

The Security Council has been criticized for being unable to act in a clear and decisive way when confronted with a crisis. The veto power of the five permanent members has been cited as the cause of this problem.

### 3. Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) assists the General Assembly in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development. ECOSOC has 54 members, all of whom are elected by the General Assembly for a three year term.

The president is elected for a one-year term and chosen amongst the small or middle powers represented on ECOSOC. ECOSOC meets once a year in July for a four-week session.

ECOSOC's functions include :

- information gathering,
- advising member nations,
- And making recommendations.

In addition, ECOSOC is well-positioned to provide policy coherence and coordinate the overlapping functions of the UN's subsidiary bodies and it is in these roles that it is most active.

### 4. Secretariat:

The United Nations Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General, assisted by a staff of international civil servants worldwide. Secretariat provides:

- studies,
- information,
- And facilities needed by United Nations bodies for their meetings.

It also carries out tasks as directed by the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council, and other UN bodies.

The United Nations Charter provides that the staff be chosen by application of the:

- highest standards of efficiency,
- competence, and integrity,
- Recruiting on a wide geographical basis.

The Charter provides that the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any authority other than the UN.

The Secretary-General's duties include:

- helping resolve international disputes,
- administering peacekeeping operations,
- organizing international conferences,
- gathering information on the implementation of Security Council decisions,
- And consulting with member governments regarding various initiatives.

Key Secretariat offices in this area include the Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his or her opinion, may threaten international peace and security.



## Secretary General

Antonio Guterres, the UN's Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the head of the Secretariat, one of the principal organs of the United Nations, and acts as the de facto spokesman and leader of the United Nations.

### **Selection The Secretariat**

The UN Charter provides little guidance for the selection of the Secretary General. The Charter states that "the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council". Over the years the process has changed, but always requires bartering and negotiation on the part of the five veto holding members of the Security Council.

In practice, a few details have remained consistent:

1. The Secretary-General is appointed for a renewable five year term
2. No Secretary-General has served more than two terms  
Candidates are selected using geographic rotation
3. No candidate has been elected from the country of a permanent member of the Security Council
4. The General Assembly has never rejected a candidate recommended by the Security Council

## 5. International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), located in The Hague, Netherlands, is the primary judicial organ of the United Nations. Established in 1945 by the United Nations Charter, the Court began work in 1946 as the successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice.

It is based in the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands, sharing the building with The Hague Academy of International Law, a private centre for the study of international law. Several of the Court's current judges are either alumni or former faculty members of the Academy.

International Court of Justice purpose is:

- To adjudicate disputes among states.
- The court has heard cases related to war crimes,
- illegal state interference,
- And ethnic cleansing, among others, and continues to hear cases.

A related court, the International Criminal Court (ICC), began operating in 2002 through international discussions initiated by the General Assembly. It is the first permanent international court charged with trying those who commit the most serious crimes under international law, including war crimes and genocide.

## **UN Activities**

The United Nations plays a large role in the field of global social activities. The UN actively encourages international human rights. The United Nations has focused considerable attention on decolonization and supporting the new states that have arisen as a result. The organization occupies itself at present in the fields of economic development, world health, and the state of the environment, the health of animals, education, and refugee work.

### **1. Peace and security**

The 1945 UN Charter envisaged a system of regulation that would ensure "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". The advent of nuclear weapons came only weeks after the signing of the Charter and provided immediate impetus to concepts of arms limitation and disarmament. In fact, the first resolution of the first meeting of the General Assembly (24 January 1946) was entitled "The Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy" and called upon the commission to make specific proposals for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction".

### **2. Disarmament**

The UN has established several forums to address multilateral disarmament issues. The principal ones are the First Committee of the General Assembly, the UN Disarmament Commission, and the Conference on

Disarmament. Items on the agenda include consideration of the possible merits of a nuclear test ban, outer-space arms control, efforts to ban chemical weapons and land mines, nuclear and conventional disarmament, nuclear-weapon-free zones, reduction of military budgets, and measures to strengthen international security.

### **3. Peacekeeping**

A large share of UN expenditures addresses the core UN mission of peace and security. The peacekeeping budget for the 2005-2006 fiscal year is approximately \$5 billion (compared to approximately \$1.5 billion for the UN core budget over the same period), with some 70,000 troops deployed in 17 missions around the world.

UN peace operations are funded by assessments, using a formula derived from the regular funding scale, but including a weighted surcharge for the five permanent Security Council members, who must approve all peacekeeping operations. This surcharge serves to offset discounted peacekeeping assessment rates for less developed countries.

### **4. Human rights and Humanitarian Assistance**

The UN Charter obliges all member nations to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights" and to take "joint and separate action" to that end. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, though not

legally binding, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all. The Assembly regularly takes up human rights issues.

The UN and its agencies are central in upholding and implementing the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A case in point is support by the UN helps countries in case of human rights by:

- Transition to democracy.
- Technical assistance in providing free and fair elections,
- improving judicial structures,
- drafting constitutions,
- training human rights officials,
- And transforming armed movements into political parties have contributed significantly to democratization worldwide.

The UN has helped run elections in countries with little democratic history, including recently in Afghanistan and East Timor.

The UN is also a forum to support the right of women to participate fully in the political, economic, and social life of their countries. The UN contributes to raising consciousness of the concept of human rights through its covenants and its attention to specific abuses through its General Assembly, Security Council resolutions, or International Court of Justice rulings.

## **Specialized Organizations**

### **1-Human Rights Watch Organization (HRW)**



It is an international non-governmental organization concerned with defending and calling for human rights. It was founded in 1978 and was called the Helsinki Human Rights Monitoring Organization. Its headquarters were in New York City and its goal was to verify and confront the Soviet Union's violations of human rights. Another organization was established in 1982 and was called the Organization of the Americas. Human Rights Watch aims to monitor human rights violations in the countries of North, South and Central America and confront these violations. In 1988, these two organizations were united into one organization called the Human Rights Watch Organization.

### **2. International Atomic Energy Agency**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is an intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the field of nuclear technology.

It seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for military purposes. The IAEA was set up as an autonomous organization on 29 July 1957. Prior to this, in 1953, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower envisioned the creation of this international body to control and develop the use of atomic energy, in his "Atoms for Peace" speech before the UN General Assembly. The organization and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize announced on 7 October 2005. Its current membership is 144 countries.

The IAEA has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Two "Regional Safeguards Offices" are located in Toronto, Canada; and Tokyo, Japan. The IAEA has two liaison offices, located in New York, USA; and Geneva, Switzerland. In addition, it has laboratories in Seibersdorf and Vienna, Austria; Monaco; and Trieste, Italy.

### **3. International Civil Aviation**

#### **Organization (ICAO)**



The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was founded in 1947. It codifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth. Its headquarters are located in the Quarter International of Montreal, Canada.

The ICAO Council adopts standards and recommended practices concerning air navigation, prevention of unlawful interference, and facilitation of border-crossing procedures for international civil aviation. In addition, the ICAO defines the protocols for air accident investigation followed by transport safety authorities in countries signatory to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, commonly known as the Chicago Convention.

#### **4- International Fund for Agricultural Development**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was established as an international financial institution in 1977, as one of the major outcomes of the 1974 World Food Conference and a response to the situation in the Sahel. IFAD is dedicated to eradicating rural poverty in developing countries.



## 5- International Labor Organization



The International Labor Organization (ILO) deals with labor issues. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. Founded in 1919, it was formed through the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles, and was initially an agency of the League of Nations. It became a member of the UN system after the demise of the League and the formation of the UN at the end of World War II. Its Constitution, as amended to date, includes the Declaration of Philadelphia on the aims and purposes of the Organization. Its secretariat is known as the International Labor Office and its current Director-General is Juan Somavia since 1999.

## 6- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy.

## **7 -United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**



UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1945. Its stated purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law, and the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the UN Charter.

## **8 - World Bank**

The World Bank (the Bank), a part of the World Bank Group (WBG), makes loans to developing countries for development programs with the stated goal of reducing poverty. The World Bank differs from the World Bank Group in that the former only comprises the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, while the latter incorporates these entities in addition to three others.

## **9- World Health Organization (WHO)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) acts as a coordinating authority on international public health. Established on 7 April 1948, and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the agency inherited the mandate and resources of its predecessor, the Health Organization, which had been an agency of the League of Nations.

