

联合国概况

The background of the cover is a photograph of a large assembly hall, likely the United Nations General Assembly. The hall is filled with people seated in rows. On the far left, a portion of a large circular emblem, the United Nations logo, is visible. The overall color scheme is a monochromatic orange-red.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

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BASIC FACTS

about the United Nations



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Introduction

The world has passed through a period of unprecedented change since the United Nations was established at San Francisco in 1945, and the United Nations itself, reflecting these new priorities and concerns of mankind, has changed greatly. Indeed, its strength has lain in its capacity to adapt itself to new circumstances, and to respond effectively to the many problems which the world faces.

But the enduring goals of the world Organization remain—to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, to establish justice and respect for international law, and to promote social progress and better standards of life for all. Much has changed, but these purposes endure.

A general introduction to the role and functions of the United Nations and its related agencies is contained in the following pages. I hope that the brief descriptions of how the Organization functions and its actions in various fields will give the reader useful information about how far we have come and the tasks that lie before us in our endeavours to build a better world for all.

*Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General*

Table of Contents

Introduction

Origin, Purposes and Principles

Preamble to the Charter	1
Origin	1
Purposes and Principles	2
Membership	3
Languages	3
Amendments to the Charter	3

The Main Organs

General Assembly	4
Security Council	6
Economic and Social Council	8
Trusteeship Council	10
International Court of Justice	11
Secretariat	12

The United Nations at Work

Maintaining the Peace	14
Middle East	17
Cyprus	22
India-Pakistan Subcontinent	24
Congo	26
Korea	27
Disarmament	29
Outer Space	32
Law of the Sea	33
Apartheid	36

Economic and Social Progress

<i>International Development Strategy</i>	40
<i>New International Economic Order</i>	41
<i>United Nations Programmes</i>	44
<i>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</i>	45
<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>	47
<i>United Nations Volunteers</i>	49
<i>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</i>	50
<i>United Nations Institute for Training and Research</i>	52
<i>United Nations University</i>	53
<i>World Food Problems</i>	54
<i>Human Environment</i>	55
<i>Population</i>	57
<i>International Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances</i>	59

"Special Help" Activities	61
<i>United Nations Children's Fund</i>	61
<i>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for</i>	
<i>Refugees</i>	62
<i>United Nations Relief and Works Agency</i>	64
<i>Natural Disasters</i>	65
Human Rights Activities	66
<i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>	66
<i>International Covenants on Human Rights</i>	67
<i>Violation of Human Rights</i>	68
<i>Other Human Rights Questions</i>	70
<i>Promotion of Equality of Men and Women</i>	71
Decolonization	73
<i>International Trusteeship System</i>	73
<i>Non-Self-Governing Territories</i>	74
<i>Declaration on the Granting of Independence</i>	74
<i>Southern Rhodesia</i>	76
<i>Namibia</i>	79
<i>Former Portuguese-administered Territories</i>	82
International Law	83
<i>International Court of Justice</i>	84
<i>Members of the International Court of Justice</i>	86
<i>International Law Commission</i>	86
<i>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law</i>	87
Related Agencies	88
IAEA/International Atomic Energy Agency	89
ILO/International Labour Organisation	90
FAO/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	91
UNESCO/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organi-	
zation	92
WHO/World Health Organization	93
WORLD BANK/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	94
IDA/International Development Association	95
IFC/International Finance Corporation	95
FUND/International Monetary Fund	96
ICAO/International Civil Aviation Organization	97
UPU/Universal Postal Union	98
ITU/International Telecommunication Union	99
WMO/World Meteorological Organization	100
IMCO/Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization	102
WIPO/World Intellectual Property Organization	103
GATT/General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	104

Membership of the United Nations	106
United Nations Information Centres and Services	109
In Brief	113

Origin, Purposes and Principles

Preamble to the Charter

The Preamble to the United Nations Charter expresses the ideals and the common aims of all the peoples whose Governments joined together to form the United Nations:

We the peoples of the United Nations determined

TO SAVE succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

TO REAFFIRM faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

TO ESTABLISH conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

TO PROMOTE social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

And for these ends:

TO PRACTICE tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and

TO UNITE our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

TO ENSURE, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

TO EMPLOY international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

Origin

The name "United Nations" was devised by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was first used in the Declaration by United Nations of

1 January 1942, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers.

The United Nations Charter was drawn up by the representatives of 50 countries at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, which met at San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. They deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the USSR, the United Kingdom and the United States at Dumbarton Oaks in August-October 1944. The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945. Poland, not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States.

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the USSR, the United Kingdom and the United States, and by a majority of other signatories; 24 October is now universally celebrated as United Nations Day.

Purposes and Principles

The purposes of the United Nations are:

- TO MAINTAIN international peace and security;
- TO DEVELOP friendly relations among nations;
- TO CO-OPERATE internationally in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- TO BE A CENTRE for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these common ends.

The United Nations acts in accordance with the following principles:

It is based on the sovereign equality of all its Members.

All Members are to fulfill in good faith their Charter obligations.

They are to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and without endangering peace, security and justice.

They are to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against other States.

They are to give the United Nations every assistance to any action it takes in accordance with the Charter, and shall not assist States against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.

The United Nations shall ensure that States which are not Members act in accordance with these principles in so far as is necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Nothing in the Charter is to authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

Membership

Membership of the United Nations is open to all peace-loving nations which accept the obligations of the United Nations Charter and, in the judgement of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

The original Members of the United Nations are those countries which signed the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, or took part in the San Francisco Conference, and which signed and ratified the Charter. Other countries can be admitted by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. (*For list of Member States, see page 108.*)

Members may be suspended or expelled by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. They may be suspended if the Security Council is taking enforcement action against them or expelled if they persistently violate the principles of the Charter. The Security Council can restore the rights of a suspended Member State.

Languages

The official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Amendments to the Charter

Amendments to the Charter come into force when they have been adopted by a vote of two thirds of the Members of the General Assembly and ratified by two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, including all the permanent members of the Security Council.

Charter amendments so far have related to the expansion of two main organs, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Amendments to Articles 23 and 27 were approved by the Assembly in 1963 and came into force in 1965. The amendment to Article 23 increased the membership of the Security Council from 11 to 15. The amended Article 27 provides that decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members (formerly seven) and on all other matters by an affirmative vote of nine members (formerly seven), including the concurring votes of the five permanent members.

An amendment to Article 109, which came into force in 1968, raised from seven to nine the number of votes required in the Security Council to convene a General Conference for reviewing the Charter.

Under an amendment to Article 61 which took effect in 1965, the Economic and Social Council was enlarged from 18 to 27 members. In 1971, the Assembly approved a further amendment to increase the Council's membership to 54. The amendment entered into force in 1973.

The Main Organs

General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of all Member States. It is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations, and has the right to discuss and make recommendations on all matters within the scope of the Charter. It has no power to compel action by any Government, but its recommendations carry moral weight as an expression of world opinion. As new problems arise, the Assembly initiates activities to deal with them—ranging from humanitarian efforts to development programmes, the campaigns against colonialism and *apartheid*, and negotiation of treaties and other agreements on matters of global concern such as the seas and outer space.

Functions

TO CONSIDER and make recommendations on the principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments;

TO DISCUSS any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, to make recommendations on it;

TO DISCUSS and, with the same exception, to make recommendations on any question within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;

TO INITIATE studies and make recommendations to promote international political co-operation, the development of international law and its codification, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and international collaboration in economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields;

TO MAKE recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation, regardless of origin, which might impair friendly relations among nations;

TO RECEIVE and consider reports from the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations;

TO SUPERVISE, through the Trusteeship Council, the execution of the Trusteeship agreements for all areas not designated as strategic;

TO CONSIDER and approve the budget of the United Nations, to apportion the contributions among Members, and to examine the budgets of specialized agencies;

TO ELECT the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the Economic and Social Council and those members of

the Trusteeship Council which are elected; to take part with the Security Council in the election of Judges of the International Court of Justice; and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, to appoint the Secretary-General.

Under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, adopted by the General Assembly in November 1950, the Assembly may take action if the Security Council, because of the lack of unanimity of its permanent members, fails to act in a case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression. The Assembly is empowered to consider the matter immediately with a view to making recommendations to Members for collective measures—including, in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression, the use of armed force when necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. If the Assembly is not in session, it may meet in emergency special session within 24 hours of a request for such a session by the Security Council, on the vote of any nine of its members, or by a majority of the Members of the United Nations.

Decisions on important questions, such as recommendations on peace and security, election of Members to organs, admission, suspension and expulsion of Members, Trusteeship questions and budgetary matters, are taken by a two-thirds majority. Decisions on other questions are made by a simple majority.

Each Member of the General Assembly has one vote.

Sessions

The General Assembly's regular session begins each year on the third Tuesday in September and continues until mid-December. Special sessions can be convened at the request of the Security Council, of a majority of Members of the United Nations or of one Member if the majority of Members concurs. An emergency special session may be called within 24 hours of a request by the Security Council on the vote of any nine members of the Council or by a majority of the United Nations Members or by one Member if the majority of Members concurs.

Main Committees

The General Assembly deals with its work through seven Main Committees on which all Members are represented. They are:

FIRST COMMITTEE (Political and Security, including the Regulation of Armaments)

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE (shares the work of the First Committee)

SECOND COMMITTEE (Economic and Financial)

THIRD COMMITTEE (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)

FOURTH COMMITTEE (Decolonization)

FIFTH COMMITTEE (Administrative and Budgetary)

SIXTH COMMITTEE (Legal)

In addition, the General Committee meets frequently during a session to supervise the smooth running of the Assembly's work. It is composed of the President and 17 Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the Chairmen of the seven Main Committees. The Credentials Committee, appointed by the President at each session, verifies the credentials of representatives.

The General Assembly, as a rule, refers all questions on its agenda to one of the Main Committees, to a joint committee, or to an *ad hoc* committee established to consider the question. These committees then submit proposals for approval to a plenary meeting of the Assembly. Voting in committees and sub-committees is by a simple majority. Questions not referred to a Main Committee are dealt with by the Assembly itself in plenary meetings.

Although the regular session of the Assembly lasts only three months each year, the Assembly's work goes on continuously:

—in special committees (such as those dealing with colonialism, *apartheid*, peace-keeping, disarmament, the sea-bed, outer space);

—in the activities of bodies established by the Assembly (such as the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Children's Fund and many others);

—in the work programme of the Secretariat, and at international conferences on specific problems (such as the environment, food, population, status of women, law of the sea, peaceful uses of atomic energy and outer space).

Security Council

The organ which has the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security is the Security Council.

The Council has 15 members. Five of these—China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States—are permanent members. The other ten are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.

Each member of the Council has one vote. Decisions on matters of procedure are made by an affirmative vote of at least nine of the 15 members. Decisions on substantive matters also require nine votes, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. This is the rule of "great Power unanimity", often referred to as the "veto". All five permanent members have exercised the veto right at one time or another. If a permanent member does not support a decision but has no desire to block it through a veto, it may abstain; an abstention is not regarded as a veto.

Under the Charter, all Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Council. While other organs of the United Nations make *recommendations* to Governments, the Council alone has the power to take decisions which Member States are obligated under the Charter to carry out. The Council has the right to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to friction between two or more countries. When a complaint concerning a threat to peace is brought before it, the Council's first action is usually to recommend that the parties try to reach agreement by peaceful means. In some cases, the Council itself undertakes investigation and mediation. It may appoint special representatives, or request the Secretary-General to use his good offices. In certain cases it may set forth principles for a peaceful settlement.

When a dispute leads to fighting, the Council's first concern is to bring this to an end as soon as possible. Over the decades since its establishment, the Council has issued many cease-fire directives which have been instrumental in preventing wider hostilities in various parts of the world. The Council may decide on enforcement measures, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes) or collective military action. Sometimes it sends United Nations peace-keeping forces to help reduce tensions in troubled areas and keep opposing forces apart.

Functions and Powers

TO MAINTAIN international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations;

TO INVESTIGATE any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;

TO RECOMMEND methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;

TO FORMULATE plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;

TO DETERMINE the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;

TO CALL ON MEMBERS to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force in order to prevent or stop aggression;

TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION against an aggressor;

TO RECOMMEND the admission of new Members and the terms on which States may become parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice;

TO EXERCISE the Trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";

TO RECOMMEND to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the General Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court;

TO SUBMIT annual and special reports to the General Assembly.

Also, under Articles 5 and 6 of the Charter, a Member State against which preventive or enforcement action has been taken by the Security Council may be suspended from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership by the General Assembly upon recommendation of the Council. A Member State which has persistently violated the principles contained in the Charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council.

The Security Council acts on behalf of all Members of the United Nations. Under Article 25 of the Charter, all Members "agree to accept and carry out" its decisions. Under Article 43, they undertake to make available to the Security Council "armed forces, assistance, and facilities" necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Security Council is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters. The Council may meet elsewhere than at Headquarters if it considers this advisable; in 1972 it held a session in Addis Ababa, and in the following year it met in Panama.

A State which is a Member of the United Nations but not of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in its discussions when the Council considers that that country's interests are specially affected. Both Members of the United Nations and non-Members, if they are parties to a dispute being considered by the Council, are invited to take part, without vote, in the discussions; the Council lays down the conditions for participation by a non-Member State.

Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council, under the authority of the General Assembly, is the organ which co-ordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and institutions—known as the "United Nations family" of organizations. The Council makes recommendations and initiates activities relating to development, world trade, industrialization, natural resources, human rights, the status of women, population, social welfare, science and technology, prevention of crime, and many other economic and social questions.

The Council has 54 members. Eighteen members are elected each year by the General Assembly for a three-year term of office.

Functions

TO BE RESPONSIBLE, under the authority of the General Assembly, for the economic and social activities of the United Nations;

TO MAKE or initiate studies, reports and recommendations on interna-

tional economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters;

TO PROMOTE respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all;

TO CALL international conferences and prepare draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly on matters within its competence;

TO NEGOTIATE agreements with the specialized agencies, defining their relationship with the United Nations;

TO CO-ORDINATE the activities of the specialized agencies by means of consultation with them and recommendations to them, and by means of recommendations to the General Assembly and the Members of the United Nations;

TO PERFORM SERVICES, approved by the Assembly, for Members of the United Nations and, upon request, for the specialized agencies;

TO CONSULT with non-governmental organizations concerned with matters with which the Council deals.

Voting in the Economic and Social Council is by simple majority; each member has one vote.

Subsidiary Bodies

The Economic and Social Council generally holds two month-long sessions each year, meeting in New York and Geneva. Throughout the year, however, there are meetings of the Council's standing committees, commissions and other subsidiary bodies, at Headquarters or in other locations.

There are standing Committees on: Non-Governmental Organizations; Negotiations with Intergovernmental Agencies; Housing, Building and Planning; Programme and Co-ordination; Natural Resources; Review and Appraisal; Science and Technology for Development; Crime Prevention and Control; and Development Planning. The Commission on Transnational Corporations is also a standing body.

The functional commissions include the Statistical Commission, Population Commission, Commission for Social Development, Commission on Human Rights, Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Commission on Human Rights has a Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has a Sub-Commission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East.

Also under the Council's authority are the regional economic commissions, whose aim is to assist in the economic and social development of their respective regions and to strengthen economic relations of the countries in each region, both among themselves and with other countries of the world. These are the Economic Commission for Africa (based in Addis Ababa), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(Bangkok), Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva), Economic Commission for Latin America (Santiago) and Economic Commission for Western Asia (Beirut).

The regional economic commissions study the problems of their regions and recommend courses of action to member Governments and specialized agencies. In recent years the work of the commissions has been expanded, and they have been increasingly involved in carrying out development projects.

Non-Governmental Organizations

The Economic and Social Council may consult non-governmental organizations on matters with which they are concerned and which fall within the competence of the Council. The Council recognizes that these organizations should have the opportunity to express their views and that they often possess special experience or technical knowledge that would be of great value to the Council in its work.

Organizations which have been given consultative status may send observers to public meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and may submit written statements relevant to the work of the Council. They may also consult with the United Nations Secretariat on matters of mutual concern.

Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council was assigned under the Charter to supervise the administration of Trust Territories which were placed under the international Trusteeship System. Major goals of the system were to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of the Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence.

The aims of the Trusteeship System have been fulfilled to such an extent that only one of the original 11 Trusteeships remains—the Pacific Islands (Micronesia), administered by the United States. The others, mostly in Africa, attained self-government or independence—either as separate States or by joining neighbouring independent countries.

Rather than assigning a fixed number of Council members, the Charter provided for a balance between members administering Trust Territories and members which did not. As the number of administering countries decreased, so did the size of the Council. There are now only five members: the United States (administering State) and the other permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, United Kingdom, USSR).

Function

The function of the Trusteeship Council is to supervise the administration