

FORM 5 HISTORY

SUB-STRAND 1: CO-OPERATION AND CONFLICTS: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

B. UNITED NATION (UN)

❖ BACKGROUNDS/ ORIGINS

The name “United Nations,” coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was first used in the “Declaration by United Nations” of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis powers. The UN was founded following the Second World War, in 1945 when the Nations were drafted at the UN Conference on International Organisation in San Francisco, California. The Charter is the constituting instrument of the UN, setting out the rights and obligations of member states, and establishing the United Nations organs and procedures. 50 nations and several non-governmental organisations attended and signed the Charter, committing to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights. The UN officially came into existence on **October 24, 1945** after ratification of the Charter. The day is now celebrated each year around the world as United Nations Day.



▪ So, the United Nations is like a world government?

Wrong. Governments represent countries and peoples. The United Nations represents neither a particular government nor any one nation. It represents all its Members and does only what the Member States decide that it should do.

Is there a set of rules or principles that guides the United Nations in its work? Yes, the Charter of the United Nations. It is a set of guidelines that explains the rights and duties of each Member country, and what needs to be done to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. When a nation becomes a Member of the UN, it accepts the aims and rules of the Charter.

▪ How did the United Nations begin?

The idea of the United Nations was born during World War II (1939-1945). World leaders who had collaborated to end the war felt a strong need for a mechanism that would help bring peace and stop future wars. They realized that this was possible only if all nations worked together through a global organization. The United Nations was to be that Organization.

▪ Where did the name “United Nations” come from?

The name “United Nations” was suggested by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was first officially used in 1942, when representatives of 26 countries signed the Declaration by United Nations. As a tribute to President Roosevelt, who died a few weeks before the signing of the Charter, all those present at the San Francisco Conference agreed to adopt the name “United Nations”.

▪ Was this the first time that such an organization had been created?

A similar organization, the League of Nations, was set up in 1919, following World War I. Its main objective was to keep world peace. However, not every country joined the League. The United States, for example, was never a member. Others that had joined later quit, and the League often failed to take action. Though it did not succeed, the League ignited a dream for a universal organization. The result was the United Nations.

▪ Who owns the United Nations Headquarters?

The United Nations Headquarters is an international zone. This means that the land on which the UN sits does not belong to just the United States, the host country, but to all the Members of the United Nations. The UN has its own flag and its own security officers who guard the area. It also has its own post office and issues its own stamps. These stamps can be used only from UN Headquarters or from UN offices in Vienna and Geneva.

▪ Who pays for the work of the United Nations?

The 192 Members of the United Nations pay for everything that the Organization does. It has no other source of income. There are two types of budgets at the UN:

- The regular budget includes the core functions at its Headquarters in New York and field offices around the world;
- The peacekeeping budget pays for various operations, often in “hot spots” around the world.

Payments to the UN for both budgets are compulsory. Members pay according to a scale of assessments agreed upon by all. This scale is based on a country's ability to pay, national income and population.

▪ **What are the official languages of the United Nations?**

The official languages used at the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The working languages at the UN Secretariat are English and French.

The road to the United Nations: a chronology

September 1939	This is how Warsaw (Poland) looked only weeks after the start of the Second World War. The war reduced much of Europe to rubble.
14 August 1941	President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met on board a battleship in the Atlantic Ocean. They adopted the Atlantic Charter, wherein a plan for world peace was outlined.
1 January 1942	On New Year's Day 1942, the representatives of 26 nations signed at Washington, D.C., the Declaration by the United Nations.
30 October 1943	Representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States signed the Moscow Declaration and agreed to set up an organization of nations to keep peace once the war was ended.
Summer and fall, 1944	Leaders of China, the United States and the United Kingdom met at <i>Dumbarton Oaks</i> , Washington, D.C., and agreed on purposes and principles of the future United Nations.
11 February 1945	President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin, after their meeting in Yalta, in the Soviet Union, declared their resolve to establish the United Nations. They also agreed on the voting system to be used in the Security Council.
26 June 1945	Representatives of 50 countries unanimously adopted the Charter of the United Nations at a conference in San Francisco.
24 October 1945	After a majority of countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, USA, UK and USSR), had signed the UN Charter and officially recognized it, the United Nations came into being. That is why 24 October is observed as United Nations Day.

❖ **SYMBOLS/ LOGO OF THE UN**



- Olive leaf – represents peace
- Map of the World – member countries/ world

❖ **AIMS OF THE UNITED NATION (UN)**

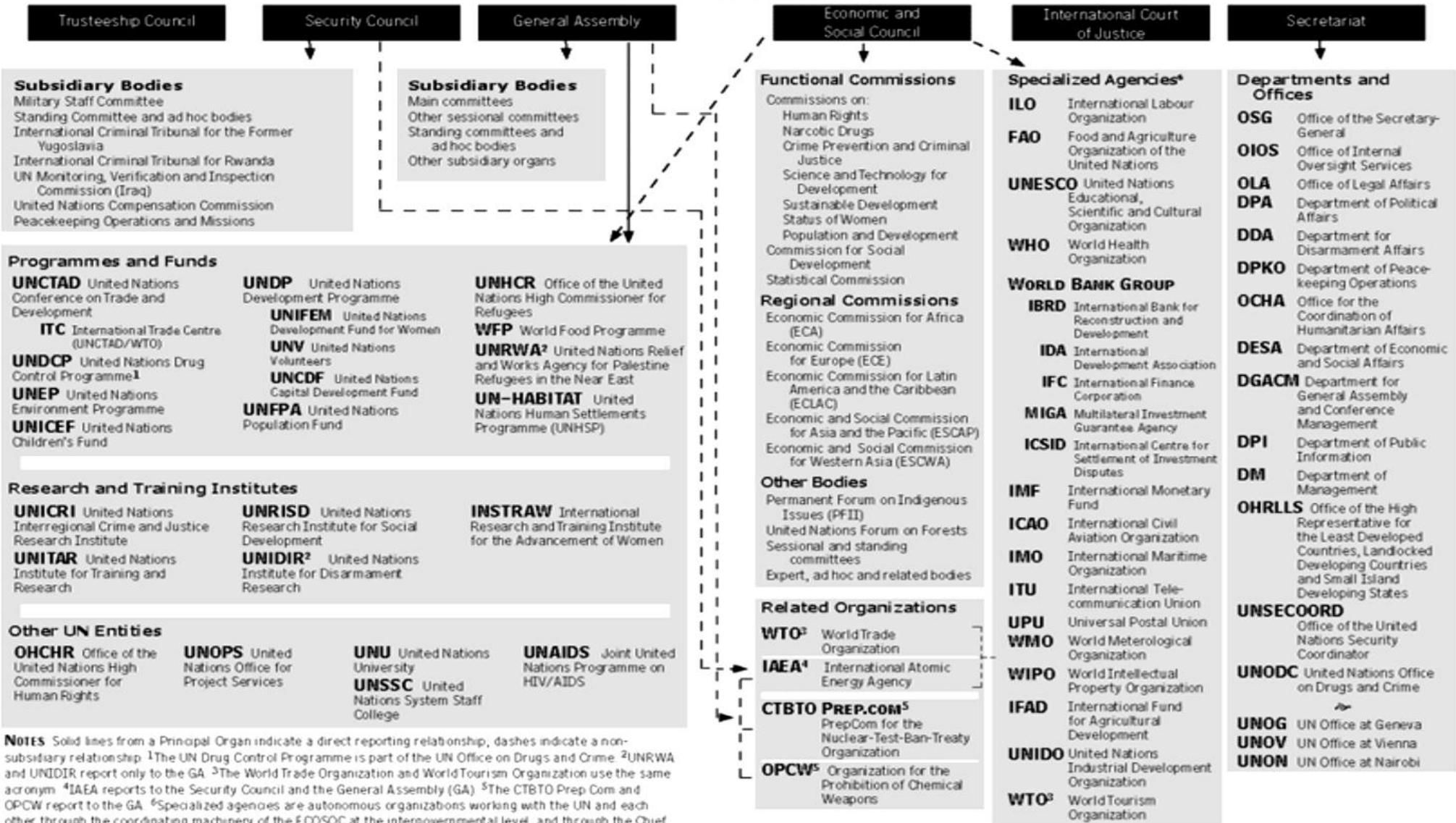
- | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To keep peace throughout the world 2. To develop friendly relations between nations 3. To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease, illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms 4. To be a center for helping nations achieve these aims |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

STRUCTURE OF THE UNITED NATION



The United Nations system

PRINCIPAL ORGANS



NOTES Solid lines from a Principal Organ indicate a direct reporting relationship, dashes indicate a non-subsidary relationship. ¹The UN Drug Control Programme is part of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. ²UNRWA and UNIDIR report only to the GA. ³The World Trade Organization and World Tourism Organization use the same acronym. ⁴IAEA reports to the Security Council and the General Assembly (GA). ⁵The CTBTO Prep Com and OPCW report to the GA. ⁶Specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the UN and each other through the coordinating machinery of the ECOSOC at the intergovernmental level, and through the Chief Executives Board for coordination (CEB) at the inter-secretariat level.

6 MAIN BRANCHES/ ORGANS OF THE UN AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

❖ Membership

- All members of the United Nations (currently 192) are represented in the General Assembly.
- Each nation, rich or poor, large or small, has one vote.
- Decisions on such issues as international peace and security, admitting new members and the UN budget are decided by a two thirds majority.
- The General Assembly's regular session begins each year in September and continues throughout the year.



The green and gold General Assembly Hall accommodates all 192 delegations. Each delegation has six seats, and there is a gallery for the media and the public, making a total of 1.898 seats

❖ Functions

- To discuss and make recommendations on any subject (except those being dealt with at the same time by the Security Council);
- To discuss questions related to military conflicts and the arms race;
- To discuss ways and means to improve the state of children, youth, women and others;
- To discuss the issues of sustainable development and human rights;
- To decide how much each Member country should pay to run the United Nations and how this money is spent.

❖ Main Committees

Most discussions in the General Assembly take place in its six main committees:

- First Committee (Disarmament and International Security)
- Second Committee (Economic and Financial)
- Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)
- Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization)
- Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary)
- Sixth Committee (Legal)

2. SECURITY COUNCIL

While the General Assembly can discuss any world concern, the Security Council has primary responsibility for questions of peace and security.



❖ Membership

- Has fifteen members. Five are permanent members: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- The other ten non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and are chosen on the basis of geographical representation.

❖ Functions

- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international conflict;
- To recommend methods and terms of settlement;
- To recommend actions against any threat or act of aggression;
- To recommend to the General Assembly who should be appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations

❖ Meetings

The Security Council, unlike the General Assembly, does not hold regular meetings. It can be called to meet at any time on short notice. The members take turns at being President of the Council for a month at a time. They serve in the English alphabetical order of the names of their countries. To pass a resolution in the Security Council, nine members of the Council must vote “yes”, but if any of the five permanent members votes “no”, it is called a veto, and the resolution does not pass.

3. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

The Economic and Social Council is the forum to discuss economic problems, such as trade, transport, economic development, and social issues. It also helps countries reach agreement on how to improve education and health conditions and to promote respect for and observance of universal human rights and freedoms of people everywhere.



❖ Functions

- Serves as the main forum for international economic and social issues;
- Promotes higher standards of living, full employment and economic and social progress;
- Advances solutions to international economic, social and health-related problems, as well as international cultural and educational cooperation.

❖ Membership

The Council has 54 members, who serve for three-year terms. Voting in the Council is by simple majority; each member has one vote. Each year, the Council holds several short sessions with regard to the organization of its work, often including representatives of civil society. The Economic and Social Council also holds an annual four-week substantive session in July, alternating the venue between Geneva and New York.

4. THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

In 1945, when the United Nations was established, there were eleven territories (mostly in Africa and in the Pacific Ocean) that were placed under international supervision. The major goals of the Trusteeship System were to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of Trust Territories and their progressive development towards self-government or independence.



❖ Membership

The Trusteeship Council is composed of the permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States). Each member has one vote, and decisions are made by a simple majority.

❖ Meetings

Since the last Trust Territory — Palau, formerly administered by the United States — achieved self-government in 1994, the Council has formally suspended operations after nearly half a century. It will meet only as the need arises.

5. THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ)

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) was established in 1946 as the main UN organ for handing down legal judgments. Only countries, not individuals, can take cases before the Court. Once a country agrees to let the Court act on a case, it must agree to comply with the Court's decision.

In addition, other organs of the UN may seek an advisory opinion from the Court. As of June 2006, the ICJ had delivered 92 judgments on disputes between states, including cases on territorial boundaries, diplomatic relations, not interfering in countries' domestic affairs, and hostage-taking.



After an international competition, French architect Louis Cordonnier's design of the Peace Palace now stands in The Hague, Netherlands. It has housed the International Court of Justice and its predecessors since 1913.

Composition

The Court sits at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. It has 15 judges who are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council. No two judges can come from the same country. Nine judges have to agree before a decision can be made. All the judgments passed by the Court are final and without appeal. If one of the states involved fails to comply with the decision, the other party may take the issue to the Security Council. On 6 February 2006, Judge Rosalyn Higgins (United Kingdom), the sole woman Member of the Court, was elected the first female President of the International Court for a term of three years.

6. THE SECRETARIAT

Is headed by the Secretary-General and it consists of an international staff working at the UN Headquarters in New York, and all over the world. It carries out the day-to-day work of the Organization. Its duties are as varied as the problems dealt with by the United Nations. These range from administering peacekeeping operations to mediating international disputes or surveying social and economic trends and problems. The Secretariat is responsible for servicing the other organs of the United Nations and administering the programmes and policies laid down by them.



Over 5,000 people, drawn from all parts of the world, work at the UN Headquarters in New York.

❖ Functions

- To gather and prepare background information on various problems so that the government delegates can study the facts and make their recommendations;
- To help carry out the decisions of the United Nations;
- To organize international conferences;
- To interpret speeches and translate documents into the UN's official languages.

❖ **Composition**

The Secretary-General is the chief officer of the United Nations. He or she is assisted by a staff of international civil servants. Unlike diplomats, who represent a particular country, the civil servants work for all 192 Member countries and take their orders not from governments, but from the Secretary-General.

❖ **How is the UN Secretary-General appointed?**

The Secretary-General is appointed for a period of five years by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. There have been eight Secretaries-General since the UN was created. The appointment of the Secretary-General follows a regional rotation.

- Trygve Lie (Norway) 1946-1952
- Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden) 1953-1961
- U Thant (Myanmar) 1961-1971
- Kurt Waldheim (Austria) 1972-1981
- Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru) 1982-1991
- Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt) 1992-1996
- Kofi Annan (Ghana) 1997-2006
- Ban Ki-moon (South Korea) 2007-

Some functions of the Secretary-General

The UN Charter describes the Secretary-General as the “chief administrative officer” of the Organization, who shall act in the capacity and perform “functions as are entrusted” to him or her by the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs. The Charter also empowers the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that threatens international peace and security.

- To propose issues to be discussed by the General Assembly or any other organ of the United Nations;

- To bring to the attention of the Security Council any problem which the Secretary-General feels may threaten world peace;
- To act as a “referee” in disputes between Member States;
- To offer his or her “good offices”