

United Nations (UN)

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What is United Nations Organisation and its objectives?

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization that was established with the purpose of promoting international cooperation and maintaining peace and security among its member states.

- **UN Charter:** The Charter consists of a preamble and 111 articles grouped into 19 chapters. The preamble consists of two principal parts as follows

First Part	Second Part
Contains a general call for the maintenance of peace and international security and respect for human rights.	It is the declaration in a contractual style that the governments of the peoples of the United Nations have agreed to the Charter, and it is the first international document regarding human rights.

- **Objectives of the UN:**
 - To develop friendly relations among nations
 - To promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

- To achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems
- To serve as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

What are the events and factors that culminated in the creation of the UN and its evolution?

- **1920:** The **League of Nations** was an international organisation founded on January 10, 1920, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I.
- **1941:** during World War II, representatives from 26 countries signed the **Atlantic Charter**, which called for the establishment of a post-war organization to promote international cooperation and prevent future wars.
- **1945:** the UN was founded after the **signing of the UN Charter** by 51 countries on June 26th. The headquarters of the UN is located in New York City.
 - The UN officially **came into existence on October 24, 1945**, after the ratification of the UN Charter by the majority of its founding members.
- **1946:** The **first meeting of the UN General Assembly** was held in London in January 1946. The Assembly is the main policymaking and representative body of the UN.
- **1947:** the UN **established the International Court of Justice**, which is the principal judicial organ of the UN.
- **1948:** the UN adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which outlines fundamental human rights that should be protected around the world.
- **Till present:** Over the years, the UN has grown to include **193 member states** and has played a key role in many global issues, including peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and human rights.

What is the organizational structure of the UN?

The United Nations (UN) has six principal organs. Five of them — the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat — are based at UN Headquarters in New York. The sixth, the International Court of Justice, is located at The Hague in the Netherlands.

Principal Organs	Specialized Agencies of UN	Funds and Programmes	Related Organizations	Other Entities and Bodies
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The United Nations (UN) has six principal organs. • UNGA • UNSC • ICJ • Secretariat • ECOSOC • Trusteeship council	They are working with the UN in accordance with relationship agreements between each organization and the UN. • FAO • IFAD • IMF • WHO • WORLD BANK	Focus on addressing particular humanitarian and development concerns. • UNDP • UNEP • UNICEF • UN-HABITAT	They work in collaboration with the UN to promote international cooperation and achieve common goals. • IOM • WTO • IAEA • OPCW	These are related to other purposes such as human rights, relief work etc. • UNHCR • UNAIDS • UN WOMEN • UNRWA
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- **Secretary-General:**

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the **chief administrative officer of the United Nations** and head of the United Nations Secretariat, one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.
- The Secretary General is **appointed by the General Assembly** upon the recommendation of the Security Council after a period of 5 years.

What is the composition of the UN?

- **Membership:** All the undisputed independent states, apart from Vatican City, are members of the United Nations. South Sudan, which joined in 2011, has joined recently, making a total of 193 UN member states.
- **Membership rules according to the UN charter:**
 - Membership is open to all other peace-loving states that **accept the obligations** contained in the present Charter and are able and willing to carry out these obligations.
 - The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will come into effect **after a decision of the General Assembly** upon the recommendation of the Security Council.
- There are **two non-member observer states** of the United Nations General Assembly:
 - The Holy See (holds sovereignty over Vatican City)
 - The State of Palestine.
- **The Cook Islands and Niue**, both states in free association with New Zealand, are full members of several UN specialized agencies and have had the treaty-making capacity recognized by the Secretariat.

What are the significant contributions of the UN?

- **Promotion of peace and security:** It has been successful in mediating several conflicts and preventing others from escalating. Some of UN Peacekeeping's successful operations so far:
 - Cambodia (1992-1993)

- Mozambique (1992-1994)
- El Salvador (1991-1995)
- Guatemala (1997-1997)
- **Promotion of democracy:** Democracy is a core value of the United Nations. The UN supports democracy by promoting human rights, development, and peace and security.
 - Ex: UN played a crucial role in resolving the conflict in Cambodia in the 1990s, which resulted in free and fair elections, and the establishment of a democratic government.
- **Humanitarian aid:** The UN provides essential humanitarian aid to people affected by conflicts, natural disasters, and other crises worldwide. For instance, it has been instrumental in providing aid to the Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh.
- **Development support:** The UN has played a vital role in promoting economic and social development in many countries through its specialized agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO. These agencies have helped in reducing poverty, promoting education, and improving healthcare in many countries.

What are the challenges and limitations of the UN?

- **Inability to prevent some conflicts:** Despite its efforts to maintain international peace and security, the UN has been unable to prevent some significant conflicts, such as the Rwandan genocide, the Bosnian War, and the ongoing Syrian civil war.
- **Limited effectiveness:** The UN has been criticized for its ineffectiveness in addressing global issues such as climate change, poverty, and inequality. This is attributed to its complex bureaucratic structures and decision-making processes.
- **Funding challenges:** It relies on funding from member states, which sometimes creates uncertainties. Some rich member states have been accused of not meeting their financial obligations, resulting in inadequate funding for programmes and activities.
- **Conflicts and disputes:** The UN is often called upon to mediate and resolve conflicts between or within countries. However, its ability to do so is often hampered by the lack of cooperation from some member states or by the complexity of the issues at hand.
- **Limited authority:** The UN is not a world government and has limited authority over its member states. As a result, it is often difficult for the UN to enforce its decisions or hold member states accountable for their actions.
- **Political influence:** The UN's decision-making processes can be influenced by political considerations, which can lead to divisions and gridlock within the organization.
- **Poverty and Inequality:** Despite efforts to address poverty and inequality, progress has been slow, and many people around the world continue to live in extreme poverty and face discrimination and marginalization.

How can the UN become a better institution of global governance?

UN can enhance its contribution towards the world through the following ways::

- **Increase funding:** The UN's ability to carry out its mission is limited by the resources it has at its disposal. Therefore, increasing funding could allow the UN to expand its efforts and have a greater impact.

- **Strengthen partnerships:** The UN could work on strengthening partnerships with other organizations and countries to achieve common goals. This would allow the UN to leverage the expertise and resources of its partners and work together towards common objectives.
- **Focus on conflict prevention:** Conflict prevention is often more cost-effective than responding to crises after they occur. Therefore, the UN could focus on developing more effective conflict prevention strategies to help reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- **Increase involvement of civil society:** The UN could increase the involvement of civil society in its work. This would allow the UN to tap into the knowledge and expertise of a wider range of stakeholders and ensure that its work is more inclusive.
- **Prioritize climate change:** Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. The UN could prioritize climate change and work on developing effective strategies to mitigate its impact and help countries adapt to the changing climate.
- **Strengthen accountability:** The UN could work on strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure that its efforts are effective and transparent. This could include improving monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as increasing transparency in decision-making processes.

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