

UN-Basics



History, Purpose and Organs

History



- **League of Nations**

- After WWI
- Political Entity
- Woodrow Wilson
 - Objective: Peace and Democracy.

- **United Nations Declaration**

- 1942 (WWII)
- Against Axis Powers

- **United Nations**

- United Nations Charter was signed on June 16th, 1945
- Effective on October 14th, 1945—After ratification of “Big Five” and others.

“Big Five”



- United States
 - China
 - Russia
 - United Kingdom
 - France
- They have *veto power* in the Security Council.

Purposes of the UN



- International Peace
- Friendly Relations among Nations
 - Equal Rights and Self-determination
- International Cooperation
 - International problems and promoting Human Rights
- Harmonizing actions of countries

Principles to Achieve Goals



- Sovereign equality of all members.
- Fulfill obligations in accordance with the Charter.
- Settle disputes by peaceful means.
- Refrain from threats or use of force to accomplish goals.
- Give assistance
- Refrain from assisting any state against which the UN is taking action
- UN is not authorized to intervene in domestic matters.
 - EXCEPT: Responsibility to protect
 - Genocide, Crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes

The UN System



- Network of entities
 - Main bodies (Principal Organs)
 - Commissions and Programs
 - Specialized Agencies

- Principal Organs:
 - International Court of Justice
 - General Assembly
 - Security Council
 - Economic and Social Council
 - Trusteeship Council
 - Secretariat

The General Assembly



- Main Organ
- All UN members are represented by up to 5 members
- Each has one vote—all have the same weight.
- **A *World Forum***
 - It does not legislate
 - It **ONLY** recommends courses of action—moral binding power
 - Many Issues: cooperation in different fields (economic, cultural, human rights)
- Observer groups are allowed to voice opinions
- **Six Main Committees:**
 - Disarmament and International Security
 - Economic and Financial
 - Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
 - Special Political and Decolonization
 - Administrative and Budgetary
 - Legal
- **Subsidiary Bodies**
 - Boards, Commissions, Committees, Councils and Panels, Working Groups.

The General Assembly



- Election of
 - Non-Permanent Members of the Security Council
 - Members of the Economic and Social Council
 - Members of the Trusteeship Council
- Suspension of privileges
- Admission of Members
- Expulsion of Members

The Security Council



- **Responsibility:**
 - Maintaining International Peace

- **Only Organ with Biding Executive Power.**

- **Dealing with Conflicts:**
 - Preventive actions—before it happens
 - Peaceful means
 - Negotiations, mediations
 - Non-peaceful
 - Military actions

- **It has no readily available military**
 - Members are expected to contribute resources.

The Security Council



● Fifteen Members

○ Five are Permanent—veto power:

- United States
- China
- France
- Russia
- United Kingdom

○ Ten are non-permanent

- Elected by the GA
- Two-Year term
- 5 are chosen each year

● Quorum: Approval requires 9 affirmative votes

The Economic and Social Council



● Functions:

- Coordinates the economic social, humanitarian and related work of UN's specialized agencies—FAO, UNESCO, IMF, WHO, etc.
- Makes recommendations to member states
- Consult with academics, business sector representatives and NGO's.

● Membership:

- 54 states
- Elected every 3 years
- 18 change every year

● Goal of Regional Economic Commissions

- To promote economic development and cooperation

The Trusteeship Council



- Not active.
- Purpose: oversee and prepare eleven trust territories for independence and self-governance.
 - UN Territories: regions without their own governments administered by member states.
 - Last trust territory: Palau, 1994.
- Members: permanent Security Council members

International Court of Justice



- Principal Judicial Organ of the UN
- Responsibilities:
 - Adjudicate disputes
 - Advisory opinions on legal issues
- Members can bring any international dispute before it.
 - All parties must agree to the jurisdiction of the court before the issue is taken.
 - Must comply with the ruling.
 - 15 judges, 9 years each. Elected by GA and SC.

Secretariat



- Core staff of the UN
- Head: Secretary General
 - Elected by GA
 - 5-year term (can be reelected)
 - Initiates and supervises studies
 - Opinion on global issues
 - Fact finding missions
 - Mediates disputes
 - Identifies and prevents potential disputes
 - Ban Ki-Moon (Republic of Korea).
- Duties:
 - Preparing studies on the environment
 - Running peacekeeping operations
 - Keeping the press and the public informed
 - Mediating international disputes

Specialized Agencies



- **UN System:**

- 16 specialized agencies
- Autonomous
- Report to ECOSOC or GA

- **Examples:**

- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- UNESCO: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- WB: World Bank
- WHO: World Health Organization
 - Eradicates diseases and other health problems
 - Control epidemics
 - Provides highest possible standard of health
 - Immunization campaigns, drug distribution, health education programs.
 - Smallpox was eradicated thanks to WHO.

Programs and Funds



- Specialized programs and Funds.
- Report to the GA and ECOSOC—except UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).
- Some:
 - UNDP: UN Development Programme
 - ▣ In 170 countries
 - ▣ Largest provider of grants for sustainable development
 - ▣ Long-term social and economic progress
 - ▣ Eradication of poverty
 - ▣ Technical cooperation
 - ▣ Disaster prevention

Model United Nations



- Simulation of the real UN, but not a direct and detailed one.
 - Middle schools, High schools and Colleges
 - Delegates and officials
 - Generic Name: conferences that include other bodies such as NATO—not part of the UN.
 - ▣ Alliance of countries of North America and Europe
 - ▣ Fulfill North Atlantic Treaty
 - ▣ 1949
 - ▣ Promotes Democratic Values
 - ▣ Consultation and cooperation in defense
 - ▣ Prevent conflict

Model United Nations



- Represent Countries
- Play roles as ambassadors, diplomats, judges.
- Discuss and seek solutions to global issues
 - Environment, Development, Refugees, Aids, Peace and Security, food and hunger, etc.
- Negotiation and Diplomacy
- Started in the US and spread to over fifty countries.

Model United Nations



● Learning Outcomes:

- Research
- Organizational leadership
- Decision-making and Problem-solving skills
- Improve their language
- Public Speaking skills
- Think analytically
- New Perspective: appreciate and understand differences.