

United Nations

The United Nations

The United Nations was formed after the end of the Second World War. The world leaders felt the necessity to establish an organisation which would be more powerful than the League of Nations.

Reasons Leading to the Formation of the United Nations

Devastating World War

Two great wars were fought in the twentieth century. Millions of people lost their lives and many more were wounded and disabled. These wars also resulted in economic depression.

Thus, the need for forming a powerful world organisation was felt which could prevent any future wars.

Failure of the League of Nations

The League of Nations was formed after the First World War to establish peace in the world. However, it was not able to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. The leaders realised the need for establishing a powerful organisation which could play an important role in preventing any wars and maintaining peace and security.

Cold War

The world was divided into armed blocs after the Second World War. While the Western or the capitalist bloc was led by the United States of America, the communist bloc was led by Soviet Russia. The war of ideology could turn into a full-fledged war. Thus, a transparent and impartial organisation was required which may help the countries to resolve their differences amicably.

Destructive Weapons

Lethal destructive weapons like atom bombs were used during the Second World War. These weapons were so powerful that they could destroy the entire world. Many countries were now involved in a race to pile up arms and more destructive weapons. The United Nations was created to save people and the Earth from these deadly weapons.

Origin of the UN

- Even during the war, leaders of Allied Governments like the President of USA, F. D. Roosevelt, and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill realised the dangers posed by war.
- They held many discussions, and as a result of these discussions and debates, the decision to form the UN was taken.
- The Charter of the UN was drafted at San Francisco in June 1945. The UN formally came into existence on 24 October 1945 when the Charter was ratified by 29 nations.



Many Conferences and discussions finally led to the San Francisco Conference in 1945. It was in this Conference that the Charter of the UN was drafted.

Aims and Objectives of the UN

- To maintain international peace and security.
- To develop friendly relations among nations.
- To achieve international cooperation in resolving international, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems.

- To work diligently for establishing peaceful relations among countries and for achieving the aims of the UN.

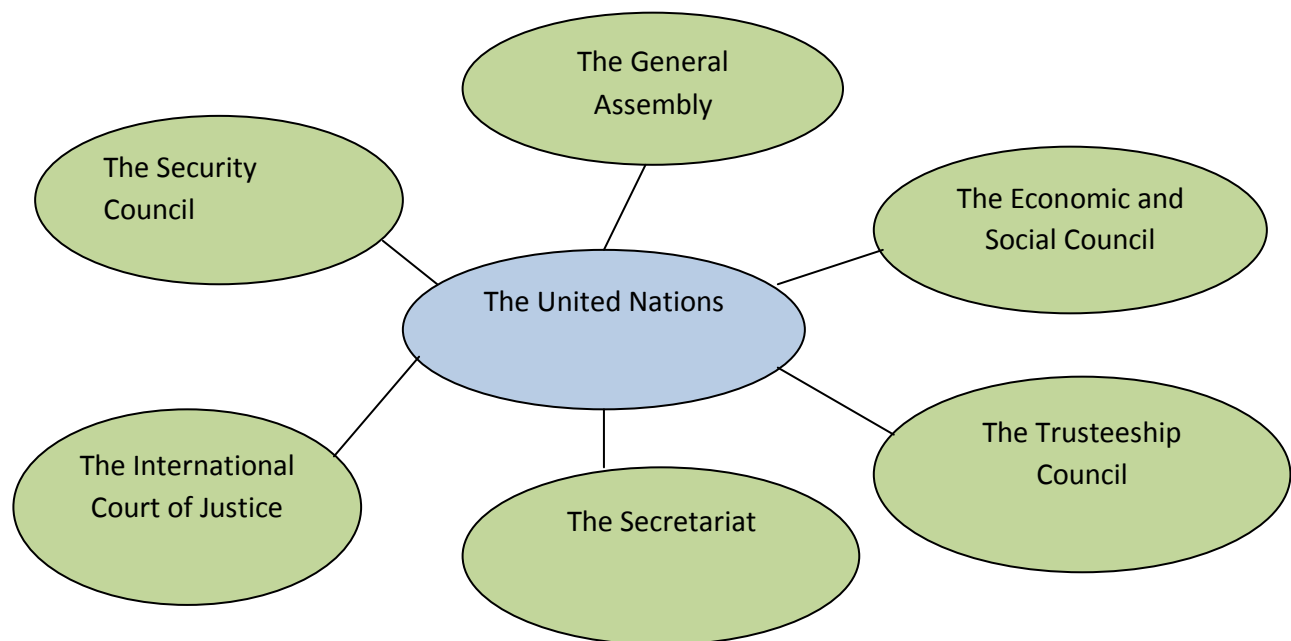
Principles of the UN

- To respect the sovereign equality of all its members.
- All obligations should be fulfilled by member nations in good faith.
- Member nations should neither threaten nor use force against any other nation.
- Member nations should support and assist the UN in every action which is taken by it.
- The UN should not interfere in internal affairs of any country.

Some Facts about the United Nations

- Headquarters of all the organs of the United Nations are based in New York, USA except the International Court of Justice which is located at the Hague in the Netherlands.
- Its flag is light blue, and in the middle is the polar map of the world embraced by olive branches. The flag was adopted on 20 October 1947.
- Expenditures of the UN are met by the contributions made by member countries.
- There are 193 member countries of the United Nations.
- India is an original member of the UN as it participated in the San Francisco Conference. India was represented by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Organs of the UN



The General Assembly

- It is the main organ of the UN, and all members of the UN are the members of the General Assembly.
- Each country has one vote. The regular session of the General Assembly begins each year on the third Tuesday of September and continues up till the third week of December. A new President is elected for each new session.

- Decisions on important matters are made by two-thirds majorities of the member nations. These matters include budgetary issues, expulsion of members and admission of new members.

Powers and Functions of the General Assembly

- To make recommendations on the principles of cooperation, while maintaining peace and security.
- To discuss any question related to international peace and security.
- To discuss and make recommendations on any question which may affect the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations.
- To receive and consider reports from the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations.
- To consider and approve the budget of the United Nations.
- To elect non-permanent members of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council and to elect the judges of the International Court of Justice.

The Security Council

- It is an executive body of the United Nations.
- It consists of 15 members. It has five permanent members—China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States of America.
- Ten other non-permanent members consist of 5 members from the Afro-Asian countries, 2 members from the Latin American countries, 2 members from the West European countries and 1 member from the East European countries.
- Each member has one vote. Decision in the Security Council is taken after at least nine members vote in its favour including the permanent members.
- All five permanent members have veto power. If any one of the five permanent nations casts a negative vote on a decision, the decision does not pass.

Functions and Powers of the Security Council

- To maintain international peace and security
- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international tension or conflicts
- To establish plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments
- To take military action against an aggressor
- To recommend the admission of new members
- To recommend the appointment of the Secretary-General and with the Assembly elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice

International Court of Justice

- It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is located at the Hague in the Netherlands.
- It settles legal disputes and gives advisory opinions on legal questions.
- The International Court of Justice has 15 judges who are elected for a period of nine years by the members of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Functions and Powers

- The Court decides cases in accordance with international treaties and conventions in force, international customs etc.
- **Voluntary Jurisdiction:** The Court may also decide matters in the cases which are referred to it by member nations.
- **Compulsory Jurisdiction** includes the following:
 - It decides cases when many treaties include the submission of disputes to the Court.

- It decides disputes related to the interpretation of international laws.
- It decides cases related to the reparation which is to be made for breaching any international obligations.
- The Court can give its **advisory opinion** only when present member nations request the Court to give its advisory opinion.
- The Court also plays an important role in codifying international laws.
- It also recommends the appropriate steps which need to be taken for peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Economic and Social Council

It is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment and economic and social progress.

The Trusteeship Council

It is in charge of the territories which were administered before the Second World War.

The Secretariat

- It is the chief administrative office of the UN. It consists of the Secretary General.
- The Secretary General is the chief administrative officer of the organisation.
- Its main function is to coordinate and supervise the activities of the various organs of the UN.