

A low-angle photograph of the United Nations Secretariat Building, a tall skyscraper with a blue glass facade and a gold-colored grid pattern. The United Nations flag is flying on a pole in the lower-left corner. On the right side of the image, a vertical pole holds several colorful signs.

EVERYTHING

YOU ALWAYS

WANTED TO KNOW

ABOUT THE

UNITED

NATIONS

FOR STUDENTS AT  
INTERMEDIATE &  
SECONDARY LEVELS



# Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the United Nations

FOR STUDENTS AT INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY LEVELS



**United Nations**  
**Department of Public Information**  
**New York, 2010**

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# 1

## An introduction to the United Nations

- The United Nations has four purposes: to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights; and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. Cooperating in this effort are more than 30 affiliated organizations, known together as the UN system.
- The United Nations is not a world government, and it does not make laws. It does, however, provide the means to help resolve international conflicts and formulate policies on matters affecting all of us.
- At the UN, all the Member States — large and small, rich and poor, with differing political views and social systems — have a voice and a vote in this process. The United Nations gives the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests when addressing international problems.
- The UN system works to promote respect for human rights, reduce poverty, fight disease and protect the environment. The United Nations leads international campaigns against drug trafficking and terrorism.
- Throughout the world, the UN and its agencies help expand food production, assist refugees, lead the fight against AIDS and set up programmes to clear landmines, among others.



# An introduction to the United Nations



The United Nations building in New York City

## What is the United Nations?

The United Nations is a unique organization of independent countries that have come together to work for world peace and social progress. The Organization formally came into existence on 24 October 1945, with 51 countries considered founding Members. By the end of 2008, the membership of the UN had grown to 192 countries. Since its inception, no country has ever been expelled from membership. Indonesia temporarily quit the UN in 1965 over a dispute with neighbouring Malaysia, but returned the following year.

## 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.

.....  
 [www.un.org/aboutun/charter/](http://www.un.org/aboutun/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.



**The UN has four main purposes:**

- 1 To keep peace throughout the world;**
- 2 To develop friendly relations among nations;**
- 3 To work together to help poor people live better lives, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms;**
- 4 To be a centre for helping nations achieve these goals.**



## 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.



### FACT CHECK

#### The building that rose from a slaughterhouse

At its first meeting in London in 1946, the General Assembly decided to locate the United Nations Headquarters in the United States. However, New

York was not the first choice. Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco were also considered. What eventually persuaded the General Assembly to settle on the present site was a last-minute gift of \$8.5 million from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Later, New York City offered additional property as a gift.

The site chosen for UN Headquarters was a run-down area of slaughterhouses, a railroad garage building and other commercial buildings.

On 24 October 1949, Secretary-General Trygve Lie laid the cornerstone of the 39-storey building. On 21 August 1950, the Secretariat staff began moving into their new offices.



Same view of the site chosen for UN Headquarters, taken from Tudor City at 41st street, looking north to 48th street (left). United Nations Headquarters building in New York City as it stands today (above).

 <http://www.un.org/tours/> • <http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/untour/>

## 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?

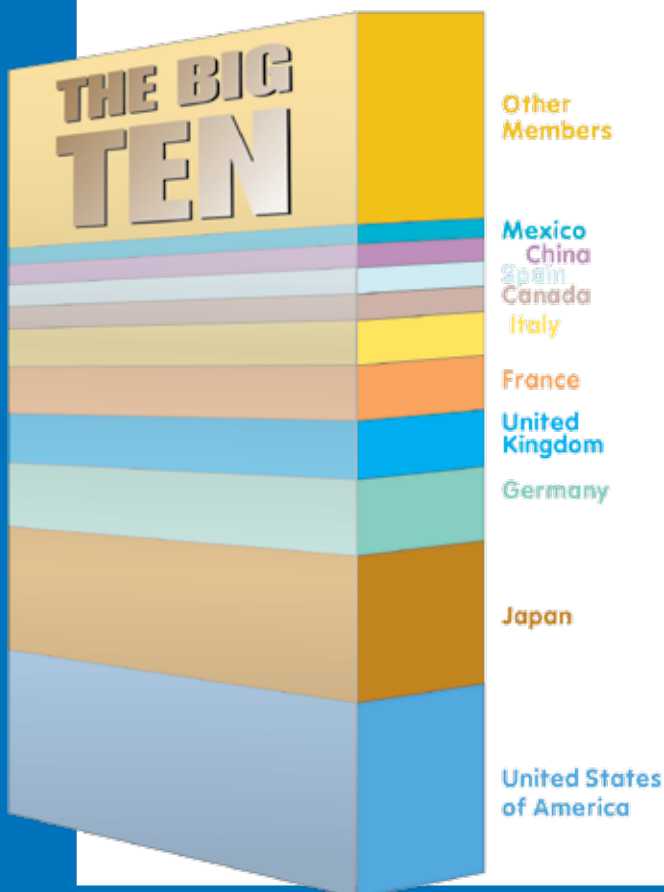
The 192 Members of the United Nations pay for everything that the Organization does. It has no other source of income. There are four types of budgets at the UN:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ The budget for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.
- ▶ An approved budget of \$1.9 billion is allocated towards a renovation project of the UN headquarters. The project is called the Capital Master Plan (CMP).

Payments to the UN for all types of 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.

## Is the United Nations a good value for the money?

The regular budget for the United Nations is approved by the General Assembly for a two-year period. The budget approved for 2008-2009 was \$4.17 billion, which pays for UN activities, staff and basic infrastructure. Citizens of the United States spend approximately the same amount on cut flowers and potted plants each year. For peacekeeping, the budget for the year from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 was about \$6.8 billion. This represented 0.5% of global military spending, estimated at \$1339 billion in 2007. That amount would pay for the entire UN system for more than 65 years. Peacekeeping is far cheaper than war and is good value for money!



## The UN is funded by Member countries. The top 10 Member States in assessment for the 2008 UN regular budget were:

### Assessment rates/amount

| Country        | per cent | US\$ millions |
|----------------|----------|---------------|
| United States  | 22.00    | 453.3         |
| Japan          | 16.62    | 342.5         |
| Germany        | 8.57     | 176.7         |
| United Kingdom | 6.64     | 136.8         |
| France         | 6.30     | 129.8         |
| Italy          | 5.07     | 104.6         |
| Canada         | 2.97     | 61.3          |
| Spain          | 2.96     | 61.1          |
| China          | 2.66     | 54.9          |
| Mexico         | 2.25     | 46.5          |

## 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

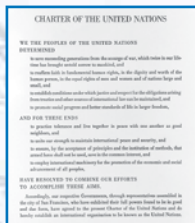
Leaders of China, the United States and the United Kingdom met at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., and agreed on purposes and principles of the future United Nations.

## 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

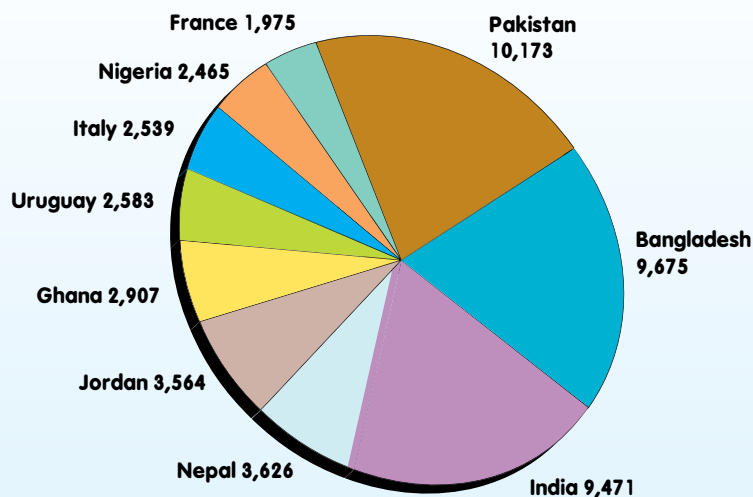
After a majority of countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, USA, UK and USSR), had signed the UN Charter and officially recognized it, the United Nations came into being. That is why 24 October is observed as United Nations Day.



For more:  
[www.un.org/aboutun](http://www.un.org/aboutun),  
[www.un.org/av](http://www.un.org/av)  
 (for photos)



## Top ten contributors of uniformed UN personnel (as of 31 March 2007)

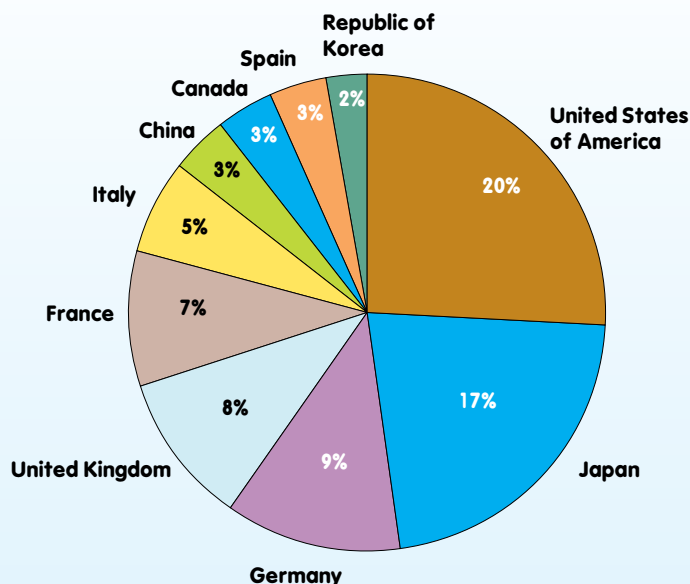


## The UN Peacekeeping budget is funded by Member countries

- The top ten contributors to the UN in 2007 were:
1. United States of America (20%),
  2. Japan (17%),
  3. Germany (9%),
  4. United Kingdom (8%),
  5. France (7%),
  6. Italy (5%),
  7. China (3%),
  8. Canada (3%),
  9. Spain (3%), and
  10. Republic of Korea (2%).

## Top ten providers of contributions to UN Peacekeeping Budget

(as of 1 January 2007)





## How does a country become a Member of the United Nations?

Membership in the Organization, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, “is open to all peace-loving States that accept the obligations contained in the United Nations Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able to carry out these obligations”. States are admitted to membership in the United Nations by decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

## How is the United Nations structured?

The work of the United Nations is carried out almost all over the world and is done by six main organs:

1. **General Assembly**
2. **Security Council**
3. **Economic and Social Council**
4. **Trusteeship Council**
5. **International Court of Justice**
6. **Secretariat**

All these organs are based at UN Headquarters in New York, except for the International Court of Justice, which is located at The Hague, Netherlands. Related to the United Nations are 15 specialized agencies that coordinate their work with the UN but are separate, autonomous organizations. They work in areas as diverse as health, agriculture, telecommunications and weather. In addition, there are 24 programmes, funds and other bodies with responsibilities in specific fields. These bodies, together with the UN proper and its specialized programmes, compose the United Nations system.

 <http://www.un.org/geninfo/faq/factsheets/memberstate.pdf>

## What is a Permanent Observer?

Non-Member States of the United Nations, which are members of one or more specialized agencies, can apply for the status of Permanent Observer. The status of a Permanent Observer is based purely on practice, and there are no provisions for it in the United Nations Charter. The practice dates from 1946, when the Secretary-General accepted the designation of the Swiss Government as a Permanent Observer to the United Nations. Observers were subsequently put forward by certain States that later became United Nations Members, including Austria, Finland, Italy, and Japan. Switzerland became a UN Member on 10 September 2002.

Permanent Observers have free access to most meetings and relevant documentation. Many regional and international organizations are also observers in the work and annual sessions of the General Assembly.



## 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.

A delegate may speak in any of the official languages, and the speech is interpreted simultaneously into the other official languages. Most UN documents are also issued in all six official languages. At times, a delegate may choose to make a statement using a non-official language. In such cases, the delegation must provide either an interpretation or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages.



**Originally English and French were established as working languages at the UN. Later, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish were added as working languages in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council. English, French, Chinese, Russian and Spanish are the working languages of the Security Council.**



The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) brought together hundreds of children and UN staff as part of a global attempt to break the world record for the largest lesson. The lesson was the value and urgency of girls' education.

## How does a new State or Government obtain recognition by the United Nations?

The recognition of a new State or Government is an act that only other States and Governments may grant or withhold. It generally implies readiness to assume diplomatic relations. The United Nations is neither a State nor a Government, and therefore does not possess any authority to recognize either a State or a Government. As an organization of independent States, it may admit a new State to its membership or accept the credentials of the representatives of a new Government.

Membership in the Organization, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, “is open to all peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the [United Nations Charter] and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able to carry out these obligations”. States are admitted to membership in the United Nations by decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. The procedure is briefly as follows:

1. The State submits an application to the Secretary-General and a letter formally stating that it accepts the obligations under the Charter.
2. The Security Council considers the application. Any recommendation for admission must receive the affirmative votes of 9 of the 15 members of the Council, provided that none of its five permanent members — China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America — have voted against the application.
3. If the Council recommends admission, the recommendation is presented to the General Assembly for consideration. A two-thirds majority vote is necessary in the Assembly for admission of a new State.
4. Membership becomes effective the date the resolution for admission is adopted.

At each session, the General Assembly considers the credentials of all representatives of Member States participating in that session. During such consideration, which routinely takes place first in the nine-member Credentials Committee but can also arise at other times, the issue can be raised whether a particular representative has been accredited by the Government actually in power. This issue is ultimately decided by a majority vote in the Assembly. It should be noted that the normal change of Governments, as through a democratic election, does not raise any issues concerning the credentials of the representative of the State concerned.

.....  
📄 <http://www.un.org/aboutun> • <http://www.un.org/members>  
.....

**FROM 51 MEMBER STATES IN 1945  
TO 192 MEMBER STATES IN 2008**



# Q&A Team Play

## Team Play

When playing as team-mates (2 or more players on a team), team-mates can work together to arrive at an answer, but must reach a consensus before declaring an answer to the other players.

1. In what year was the United Nations founded?
2. How many Member States does the United Nations have?
3. What are the official languages of the United Nations?
4. Who coined the phrase "United Nations"?
5. How many organs does the United Nations have?
6. What was the League of Nations?
7. Has any country ever quit the United Nations?
8. What is the list of rules and regulations of the UN called?
9. Name one of the aims and purposes of the United Nations.
10. When and where was the United Nations Declaration signed?



This is the United Nations flag. It has a blue background with a white emblem in the centre. The emblem has a world map with olive branches around it, signifying world peace. The emblem should be one half the height of the flag and entirely centred.

# 2

## The United Nations Family

### Some achievements by the UN System

- The UN was a promoter of the great movement of decolonization, which led to the independence of more than 80 nations.
- The UN system is a major purchaser of goods and services, totaling over \$6.4 billion a year. UNICEF buys half the vaccines produced worldwide.
- UN relief agencies together provide aid and protection to more than 23 million refugees and displaced persons worldwide.
- The UN system defines technical standards in telecommunication, aviation, shipping and postal services, which make international transactions possible.
- UN campaigns for universal immunization against childhood diseases have eradicated smallpox and reduced cases of polio by 99 per cent.
- The World Food Programme, the UN's front-line food aid organization, ships over 5 million tonnes of food annually, feeding some 113 million people in 80 countries.





# The United Nations Family

The UN Charter establishes six main organs of the United Nations. This is a summary of their composition and functions:

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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. Other matters are decided by simple majority. In recent years, a special effort has been made to reach decisions through consensus, rather than by taking a formal vote.

The General Assembly's regular session begins each year in September and continues throughout the year. At the beginning of each regular session, the Assembly holds a general debate at which Heads of State or Government and others present views on a wide-ranging agenda of issues of concern to the international community, from war and terrorism to disease and poverty.

In 2005, world leaders gathered at UN Headquarters in New York for the General Assembly High Level Summit and to commemorate the Organization's 60th birthday. Each year, the Assembly elects a president who presides over—that is, runs—the meetings.



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.



President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss of the Switzerland.

## 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)



### One country, one vote

In the General Assembly, each member has one vote. This rule applies to all nations, large and small. China has over a billion people. It has one vote. Palau, one of the smallest UN Member countries, has only 17,000 people. It, too, has one vote.

## Some recent actions by the General Assembly

- ▶ In 2006, United Nations Member States agreed on a process of reforming the work of the Assembly that involves speeding up the decision-making process, streamlining the Assembly's agenda, and strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly President.
- ▶ In 2006, the Assembly approved the establishment of the new, strengthened Human Rights Council to replace the much-criticized UN Human Rights Commission. The new Council that was inaugurated on 19 June 2006 in Geneva has a higher status in the UN system as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly.
- ▶ The Assembly designated 2001-2010 as Roll Back Malaria decade in developing countries, particularly in Africa. The Roll Back Malaria movement helps prevent disease and improves lives. It is estimated that malaria kills up to 2.7 million persons each year; 90 per cent of these deaths occur in Africa, and children under the age of five years are the most vulnerable. Malaria kills more than 3,000 African children every day.
- ▶ At the United Nations Summit in 2000, and reconfirmed in 2005, world leaders set goals in a landmark Millennium Declaration to make the world of the twenty-first century a safer and better place.

.....  
 [www.un.org/ga](http://www.un.org/ga)  
 .....

## THE SECURITY COUNCIL

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

### Membership

The Security Council 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.

.....  
🔗 [www.un.org/docs/sc/](http://www.un.org/docs/sc/)  
.....



The Security Council chamber, a gift from Norway, was designed by Norwegian artist Arnstein Arneberg. A large mural by Per Krohg (Norway), symbolizing the promise of future peace and individual freedom, covers most of the east wall.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks with Red Cross Youth students in the Security Council.

### Some recent actions by the Security Council

- ▶ In July 2007, the Council voted unanimously to deploy a 26,000-strong joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in an attempt to quell the violence in Sudan’s western Darfur region, where fighting between pro-Government militias and rebel guerillas has killed more than 250,000 people since 2003.
- ▶ The Council established two international criminal tribunals to prosecute crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.
- ▶ Following the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, the Council established its Counter-Terrorism Committee to help States increase their capability to fight terrorism.



# Up close

## Is it fair that only five major Powers have the right to veto?



At the end of World War II, China, France, the Russian Federation (originally the USSR), the United Kingdom and the United States played key roles in the establishment of the United Nations. The creators of the UN Charter conceived that these five countries would continue to play important roles in the maintenance of international peace and security. So the “big five” were given a special voting power known as the “right to veto”. It

was agreed by the drafters that if any one of the “big five” cast a negative vote in the 15-member Security Council, the resolution or decision would not be approved.

### 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.



A gift from Sweden, the ECOSOC chamber was designed by Sven Markelius of Sweden.

#### 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.

## Subsidiary bodies

ECOSOC has many commissions to administer the wide range of issues that fall within its purview. Among them, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The Council also directs 5 regional commissions: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

## Some UN Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes

The Economic and Social Council considers reports from several specialized agencies, funds and programmes, each of which is a separate organization with its own membership, budget and headquarters. A partial list follows.

|                                                                                     |                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <b>UNDP</b><br><a href="http://www.undp.org">www.undp.org</a>       | The United Nations Development Programme is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. |
|  | <b>UNICEF</b><br><a href="http://www.unicef.org">www.unicef.org</a> | The United Nations Children's Fund is the main UN organization defending, promoting and protecting children's rights. It also works towards protecting the world's most disadvantaged children.                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <b>UNEP</b><br><a href="http://www.unep.org">www.unep.org</a>       | The United Nations Environment Programme provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment. It supports environmental monitoring, assessment and early warning.                                                                                                                                                 |
|  | <b>UNFPA</b><br><a href="http://www.unfpa.org">www.unfpa.org</a>    | The United Nations Population Fund promotes the right of women, men and children to enjoy a healthy life. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.  |
|  | <b>UNHCR</b><br><a href="http://www.unhcr.org">www.unhcr.org</a>    | The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provides legal protection for refugees and seeks durable solutions to their problems, either by helping them to return voluntarily to their homes or to settle in other countries.                                                                                                       |
|  | <b>ILO</b><br><a href="http://www.ilo.org">www.ilo.org</a>          | The International Labour Organization formulates policies and programmes to promote basic human rights of workers, improve working and living conditions and enhance employment opportunities.                                                                                                                                             |
|  | <b>IMF</b><br><a href="http://www.imf.org">www.imf.org</a>          | The International Monetary Fund ensures that the global monetary and financial system is stable. It advises on key economic policies, provides temporary financial assistance and training, promotes growth and alleviates poverty.                                                                                                        |



**FAO**

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

The Food and Agriculture Organization works to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and to raise levels of nutrition. It also assists its Member States in the sustainable development of their agricultural sector.



**UNESCO**

[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization promotes international cooperation and facilitates the exchange of information in the fields of education, science, culture and communications.



**WHO**

[www.who.org](http://www.who.org)

The World Health Organization directs and coordinates international health work. It also promotes and coordinates research on preventing disease.



**World Bank**

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

The World Bank provides low-interest loans and interest-free credits and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, communications and other purposes.



**ICAO**

[www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

The International Civil Aviation Organization assures the safe, secure, orderly and sustainable development of international air transport while minimizing the adverse effect of global civil aviation on the environment.



**IMO**

[www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

The International Maritime Organization is responsible for safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans and the prevention of marine pollution from ships.



**ITU**

[www.itu.int](http://www.itu.int)

The International Telecommunications Union works with governments and the private sector to coordinate the operation of global telecommunications networks and services. From broadband internet to latest-generation wireless technologies, from aeronautical and maritime navigation to radio astronomy and satellite-based meteorology, from phone and fax services to television broadcasting, ITU helps the world communicate.



**UPU**

[www.upu.int](http://www.upu.int)

The Universal Postal Union fosters the sustainable development of quality universal, efficient, accessible postal services in order to facilitate communication among the people of the world.



**WMO**

[www.wmo.int](http://www.wmo.int)

The World Meteorological Organization coordinates global scientific activity on the state and behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the oceans, the climate it produces and the resulting distribution of water resources.



**WIPO**

[www.wipo.int](http://www.wipo.int)

The World Intellectual Property Organization ensures that the rights of creators and owners of intellectual property are protected worldwide and that inventors and authors are, thus, recognized and rewarded for their ingenuity.



**IFAD**

[www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)

The International Fund for Agricultural Development provides direct funding and mobilizes additional resources for programmes designed to promote the economic advancement of the rural poor. 800 million women, children and men live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods.



**UNIDO**

[www.unido.org](http://www.unido.org)

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization helps countries improve their national development policies and regulatory frameworks. Its tailor-made programmes support market access and access to finance for micro, small and medium scale agro-industrial development.





### UNWTO

[www.world-tourism.org](http://www.world-tourism.org)

The World Tourism Organization promotes the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, with the aim of contributing to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. It pays particular attention to the interests of developing countries in the field of tourism.



UNITED NATIONS  
*Office on Drugs and Crime*

### UNODC

[www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime assists countries in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. It seeks to increase understanding of drug and crime issues and to assist countries in developing domestic legislature and implementing international treaties.



### UNIFEM

[www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

The United Nations Development Fund for Women provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality, and acts as a catalyst to ensure the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities.



### WFP

[www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

The World Food Programme supplies food to sustain victims of man-made and natural disasters, improves the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times in their lives, and promotes self-reliance of people and communities.



### UNHABITAT

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of ensuring adequate shelter for all.



The Trusteeship Council chamber was furnished by Denmark and designed by Finn Juhl, a Dane. Against one wall is a nine-foot statue of a woman with arms up-raised carved from teak by Henrik Starcke, also a Dane.

## 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.



## FACT SHEET

### Decolonization

In 1945, half of the world's people lived in countries that were controlled by outsiders. These countries, known as colonies, were divided by a handful of major Powers, including Great Britain, France and Portugal. Through the process known as decolonization, the United Nations has helped most of the colonies gain independence. The General Assembly, in 1960, adopted a declaration to urge the speedy independence of all colonies and peoples. The following year it set up the Special Committee on Decolonization. As a result of the UN's decolonization efforts, more than 80 former colonies are now themselves members of the United Nations. Today, only 1.5 million people live in dependent territories.



The International Court of Justice in observance of its 60th anniversary at the Peace Palace at the Hague in the Netherlands.

### THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) was established in 1945 and assumed its functions 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.

### Composition

The Court sits at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands. It has fifteen 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.



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.

## Some recent decisions by the International Court of Justice

- ▶ After the Court concluded public hearings in 2006, it decided to hear the case brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina alleging that Serbia and Montenegro had breached their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
- ▶ In 2004, the Court unanimously reaffirmed that Israel's construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory violates international law.
- ▶ In 2002, the Court ruled on the border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, placing the main territory under dispute, the Bakassi Peninsula, under Cameroonian sovereignty.

.....  
🔗 [www.icj-cij.org](http://www.icj-cij.org)  
.....

### ✓ FACT CHECK

#### What are some other international courts?

The International Criminal Court (ICC) adjudicates individuals for the most serious offenses of global concern, such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

## THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General, consists of an international staff working at the United Nations 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.

### Who it serves

The United Nations Headquarters was designed to serve four major groups: delegations, who represent the 192 current Member States and who send more than 5,000 persons to New York each year for the annual sessions of the General Assembly; the international staff or Secretariat, numbering about 5,478 persons in New York; visitors, estimated at about 1 million in 2007; and journalists, close to 2,000 of whom are permanently accredited while nearly 5,000 are present during major meetings. There are also more than 3,000 non-governmental organizations accredited to the United Nations, many of whom attend meetings at Headquarters. The aggregate annual income to New York resulting from the UN presence is estimated at \$3.3 billion.



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-



Dag Hammarskjöld

## 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”.

### **FACT CHECK**

#### **Does the Secretary-General act alone?**

No. The Secretary-General does not act without the support and approval of the United Nations Member States. Any course of action, whether it concerns sending peacekeeping troops to war-torn areas or helping a country rebuild after a war or a natural disaster, must be set by the Member States.



## BAN KI-MOON

Ban Ki-moon of the Republic of Korea (ROK), the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, brings to his post 37 years of service both in government and on the global stage.

**Career highlights** At the time of his election as Secretary-General, Mr. Ban was his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. His long tenure with the ministry included postings in New Delhi, Washington D.C. and Vienna, and responsibility for a variety of portfolios, including Foreign Policy Advisor to the President, Chief National Security

Advisor to the President, Deputy Minister for Policy Planning and Director-General of American Affairs. Throughout this service, his guiding vision was that of a peaceful Korean peninsula, playing an expanding role for peace and prosperity in the region and the world.

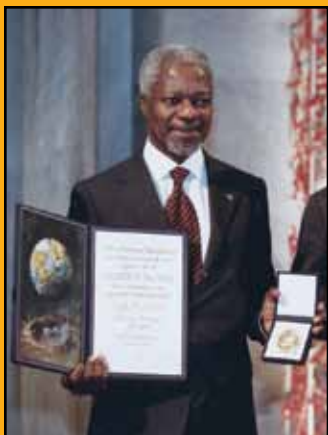
Mr. Ban has long-standing ties with the United Nations, dating back to 1975, when he worked for the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Division. That work expanded over the years, with assignments as First Secretary at the ROK's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, Director of the UN Division at the Ministry's headquarters in Seoul, and Ambassador to Vienna, during which time, in 1999, he served as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization. In 2001-2002, as Chef-de-Cabinet during the ROK's Presidency of the General Assembly, he facilitated the prompt adoption of the first resolution of the session, condemning the terrorist attacks of 11 September, and undertook a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening the Assembly's functioning, thereby helping to turn a session that started out in crisis and confusion into one in which a number of important reforms were adopted.

Mr. Ban has also been actively involved in issues relating to inter-Korean relations. In 1992, as Special Advisor to the Foreign Minister, he served as Vice Chair of the South-North Joint Nuclear Control Commission following the adoption of the historic Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. In September 2005, as Foreign Minister, he played a leading role in bringing about another landmark agreement aimed at promoting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula with the adoption at the Six Party Talks of the Joint Statement on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

**Education** Mr. Ban received a bachelor's degree in international relations from Seoul National University in 1970. In 1985, he earned a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

**Prizes and awards** Mr. Ban has received numerous national and international prizes, medals and honours. In 1975, 1986 and again in 2006, he was awarded the ROK's Highest Order of Service Merit for service to his country.

**Personal** Mr. Ban was born on 13 June 1944. He and his wife, Madam Yoo (Ban) Soon-taek, whom he met in high school in 1962, have one son and two daughters. In addition to Korean, Mr. Ban speaks English and French.



The seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, holds the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the United Nations and to him.

## Why a Nobel peace prize for the United Nations?

The Norwegian Nobel Committee decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001 in two equal portions—to the United Nations and to its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan – “for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world.”

The Committee said the end of the Cold War had at last made it possible for the UN to perform more fully the part it was originally intended to play; the Organization was at the forefront of efforts to achieve peace and security in the world, and central to the international mobilization aimed at meeting the world’s economic, social and environmental challenges. Besides, Secretary-General Kofi Annan had been pre-eminent in bringing new life to the Organization, “while clearly underlining the UN’s traditional responsibility for peace and security, he has also emphasized its obligations with regard to human rights.” In its statement announcing the peace prize, the Nobel Committee acknowledged “he has risen to such new challenges as HIV/AIDS and international terrorism, and brought about more efficient utilization of the UN’s modest resources.”

In 2007, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Albert Arnold Gore Jr, former Vice-President of the United States. This was the fifteenth time the UN was honoured by the Nobel Committee with the peace award. Previous winners were: the International Atomic Energy Agency and Mohamed ElBaradei, IAEA Director-General ( 2005); the United Nations and Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General (2001); the UN Peacekeeping Forces (1988); Seán MacBride, UN Commissioner for Namibia (1974); Lester Bowles Pearson, for striving to end the Suez conflict and Middle East question through the UN (1957); the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1954 and 1981); the International Labour Organization (1969); the UN Children’s Fund (1965); Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General (1961); Léon Jouhaux, a founder of the ILO (1951); Ralph Bunche, UN Trusteeship Director (1950); Lord John Boyd Orr, founding Director-General of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (1949); and Cordell Hull, US Secretary of State instrumental in establishing the United Nations (1945).



# Q&A Team Play

## Team Play

When playing as team-mates (2 or more players on a team), team-mates can work together to arrive at an answer, but must reach a consensus before declaring an answer to the other players.

1. What does UNICEF stand for?
2. Where is the International Court of Justice located?
3. What is the name of the UN agency that deals with refugees?
4. What is a veto?
5. How many votes does each Member State have in the General Assembly?
6. What is the main judicial organ of the United Nations?
7. How many members does the Security Council have?
8. True or false- China has more votes at the General Assembly than Monaco because its population is larger?
9. On what does the General Assembly discuss and/or make suggestions?
10. With what is ECOSOC concerned?
11. Which Trust territory was the last country to achieve self-government thanks to the Trusteeship Council?
12. The judges of the International Court of Justice come from how many different countries?
13. Who are the members of the Secretariat?
14. How many times has the United Nations system been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?



# 3

## The United Nations works for international peace and security

### UN peacemaking efforts

- UN peacebuilding in post-conflict situations often includes overseeing the collection and destruction of hundreds of thousands of weapons and facilitating the reintegration of former combatants into civil society.
- The UN played a crucial role in encouraging countries to support the 1997 Ottawa Convention - which provides for the total ban on the production, export and use of landmines - and continues to promote universal adherence to this treaty.
- UN support has resulted in a wide range of agreements, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and treaties to establish nuclear-free zones.
- During the 1990s, more than 2 million children were killed and 6 million seriously injured in conflicts involving revolvers, assault rifles, mortars, hand grenades and portable missile launchers. At a UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Lights Weapons in 2001, States agreed on measures to strengthen international cooperation in curbing this illegal arms trade.



# The United Nations works for international peace and security

## The UN was created to keep peace. How does it do that?

The United Nations serves as a global forum where countries can raise and discuss the most difficult issues, including problems of war and peace. When government leaders talk to each other face-to-face, a dialogue is established. This can result in agreement on how to peacefully settle disputes. When many countries speak with one voice – or by consensus – it creates a global pressure on all. The Secretary-General, either directly or through a representative, may also advance a dialogue between and among nations.



Blue helmets and uniforms

## Who commands the peacekeeping operations?

Peacekeeping operations are established by the Security Council and directed by the Secretary-General, often through a special representative. When a threat to peace is brought before the Council, it usually first asks the parties to reach agreement by peaceful means. If fighting breaks out or persists, the Council tries to secure a ceasefire. It may then send peacekeeping missions to troubled areas to restore peace or call for economic sanctions and embargoes.

## Has the UN stopped any war?

The UN has helped prevent many conflicts from flaring up into full-scale wars. It has also negotiated the peaceful settlement of conflicts. On many occasions, the UN has provided a mechanism to help defuse hostilities, for example, the Berlin crisis (1948-1949), the Cuban missile crisis (1962) and the 1973 Middle East crisis. In each of these cases, UN intervention helped prevent war between the super-powers. The UN also played a major role in ending wars in the Congo (1964), between Iran and Iraq (1988), and in El Salvador (1992) and Guatemala (1996). The UN led the way to a peace that has brought sustained economic growth in Mozambique (1994); independence to Timor-Leste (2002) and in December 2005, the Organization successfully completed its peacekeeping mandate in Sierra Leone.

## Other accomplishments include:

- ▶ The UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) supervised Namibia's first free and fair elections, leading to its independence.
- ▶ In Cambodia, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) monitored a ceasefire and withdrawal of foreign forces, supervised various government offices and organized a free and fair election.
- ▶ In the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) worked to protect the civilians in demilitarized zones and to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance.



## What happens when a country ignores the decisions of the Security Council?

When decisions of the Security Council are not complied with, the Council may take several actions to ensure their implementation. Should a country threaten or breach the peace or commit an act of aggression, it may impose economic and trade sanctions, or other specific measures such as arms and travel ban and diplomatic restrictions. It can also authorize the use of force in certain instances. But these measures are usually a last resort, to be used only if peaceful means of settling a dispute have been exhausted.

The Security Council can authorize a coalition of Member States to use “all necessary means”, including military action, to deal with a conflict as for example :

- ▶ in 1991 to restore the sovereignty of Kuwait after its invasion by Iraq;
- ▶ in 1992 to secure the environment for humanitarian relief to be delivered in Somalia;
- ▶ in 1994 to restore the democratically-elected government in Haiti;
- ▶ in 1999 to restore peace and security in East Timor.

## Does the UN have an army?

No, the United Nations has no standing international police or military force. Troops who serve in the UN peacekeeping operations are voluntarily contributed by the Member States. Civilians, often drawn from the UN itself, also play a key role in forming such operations.

### UN Peacekeepers on patrol in El Arish, Egypt.

The first UN peacekeeping operation, the UN Truce Supervision Organization, was created in 1948 following a war between Israel and its Arab neighbours. To this day, UNTSO's military observers remain in the region to monitor ceasefires and supervise agreements.



## What, then, is a peacekeeping operation?

Peacekeeping has traditionally been defined as the use of multinational forces, under UN command, to help control and resolve conflicts between countries. Peacekeeping operations fulfill the role of a neutral third party to help create and maintain a ceasefire and form a buffer zone between warring parties. They also provide electoral assistance and help in clearing deadly landmines.

As peacekeepers maintain peace on the ground, mediators from the United Nations meet with leaders from the disputing parties or countries and try to reach a peaceful solution.

There are two types of peacekeeping operations: observer missions and peacekeeping forces. Observers are not armed. Soldiers of UN peacekeeping forces carry light weapons, which they may use only in self-defence. The UN peacekeepers are easily identifiable by the UN insignia and the blue beret they wear when on duty. The blue helmet, which has become the symbol of UN peacekeepers, is carried during all operations and is worn when there is danger. Peacekeepers wear their own national uniforms. Governments that volunteer personnel retain ultimate control over their own military forces serving under the UN flag.

## Why does the UN have so many peacekeeping operations?

Peacekeeping operations are created in response to serious military or humanitarian crises. In the past, peacekeepers were mainly involved in keeping peace between warring nations. But now many nations are at war with themselves. Due to civil strife and ethnic conflicts, some governments are unable to exercise authority over their own territory, causing great human suffering. In such situations, the United Nations is often asked, on the one hand, to negotiate a settlement and, on the other, to provide emergency relief to the people affected by the conflict. Working under difficult conditions, the United Nations integrates humanitarian assistance with efforts to resolve the crisis.

## What are some recent United Nations peacekeeping operations?

In the first 40 years of its history (1945-1985); the United Nations set up only 13 peacekeeping operations. In the 20 years since then (1986-2006), 47 peacekeeping missions were deployed.

### United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)

A joint African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur was authorized by the Security Council on 31 July 2007. The Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, authorized UNAMID to take necessary action to support the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, as well as to protect its personnel and civilians, without

“prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Sudan”. The Council decided that UNAMID would start implementing its mandated tasks no later than 31 December 2007.

### United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)

On 25 September 2007, the Security Council approved the establishment in Chad and the Central African Republic, in concert with the European Union, of a multi-dimensional presence intended to help create the security conditions conducive to a voluntary, secure and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council decided that the multi-dimensional presence would include a United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad.



Sudanese refugees in Iridimi Camp in Chad.



UN Peacekeeping troops from Rwanda mount the guard during the commemoration of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, at the Headquarters of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in Khartoum.

### United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS)

On 24 March 2005, the Security Council voted unanimously to send 10,000 troops and more than 700 civilian police to southern Sudan to support the peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which ended more than two decades of civil strife. Until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, there had been 21 years of continuous fighting over resources, power, the role of religion and self-determination in southern Sudan. Over two million people died, four million people were uprooted and some 600,000 people fled the country as refugees.

### United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)

The UN was called in to East Timor (now Timor-Leste) in late 1999 to guide the Timorese towards statehood in the wake of violence and devastation that followed a UN-led consultation on integration with Indonesia. The UN established an effective administration, enabled refugees to return, helped to develop civil and social services, ensured humanitarian assistance, supported capacity-building for self-governance and helped to establish conditions for sustainable development. In 2005, the peacekeeping mission was transformed into an assistance and peacebuilding mission.

### United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)

The efforts of the international community to end an 11-year civil war and move the country towards peace enabled Sierra Leone since 2002 to enjoy a much improved security environment. After a decisive intervention by British troops in 2001, the UN helped disarm and demobilize some 75,000 combatants. UN peacekeepers reconstructed roads; renovated and built schools, houses of worship and clinics; and initiated agricultural projects and welfare programmes. UNAMSIL also helped Sierra Leone to ensure that the rights of its citizens were fully protected; to bring to justice those who bore the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law through the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone; and to develop a professional and democratic police force. A new mission—the United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)—was established by the Security Council to help consolidate the peace, strengthen human rights, develop the economy, improve transparency and hold elections in 2007. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, which came to a close at the end of 2005, could serve as a prototype for the UN's new emphasis on peacebuilding.





## What else does the UN do for peace?

The UN's work for peace does not end with the successful conclusion of a peacekeeping mission. In the aftermath of a conflict, the UN helps displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes. It clears mines, repairs roads and bridges and provides economic and technical help to rebuild the economy. It also monitors elections and closely follows how a country respects the human rights of its citizens. This process, also known as peacebuilding, has helped over 60 countries to build democratic institutions.

## Peacebuilding, peacekeeping, nation-building: what's the difference?

Peacekeeping is organized around a military deployment. It is often a central part of a peacebuilding effort. Nation-building means different things to different people and is not a term used by the UN. It normally refers to a longer historical process and includes the building up of a national identity. Peacebuilding provides all that is needed to help a country move from war to peace and a functioning self-government.

## The UN has been engaged in peacebuilding activities for years, but only recently decided to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. Why?

The United Nations has played a vital role in reducing the level of conflict in several regions by mediating peace agreements and assisting in their implementation. However, some of those accords have failed to take hold, such as in Angola in 1993 and Rwanda in 1994. Roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years, driving home the message that, to prevent conflict, peace agreements must be implemented in a sustained manner.

In June 2006, the UN set up the Peacebuilding Commission with a view to helping countries make the transition from war to lasting peace. It forms the connecting link between peacekeeping and post-conflict operations. Its job is to bring together all the major actors in a given situation to discuss and decide on a long-term peacebuilding strategy. What that means is that assistance is better coordinated, money is better spent, and there is a real link between immediate post-conflict efforts on the one hand and long-term recovery and development efforts on the other.

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 [www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/](http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/)  
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## The United Nations works for peace and progress. But there is so little peace in the world today. Do we really need the UN?

The world has fought more than 50 wars in the past 60 years. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2006 alone, 17 major armed conflicts were waged around the world. Luckily, none of them turned into devastating world wars. There is general agreement that the UN's campaign for peace and disarmament played a key role in this regard.

Many people feel that the UN should be made stronger to stop smaller wars and have its decisions fully carried out. But the effectiveness of UN actions depends on the political will of the Member States — on their readiness to respect the decisions they

themselves take. Also, these operations are costly. Because of a lack of funds, the UN is often unable to play a greater role.

The strength of the UN comes from its refusal to give up, even in the face of the stiffest challenge. When countries at war do not have the political will to stop, the UN sometimes has to withdraw its peacekeeping troops. But it continues its work through diplomacy and negotiations, by constantly speaking with the parties concerned. When better conditions are created, the peacekeepers may return.

The world still has a long way to go before it can ensure peace and justice for everyone. Wars, poverty and human rights violations are still widespread. But that's precisely why there is a need for the UN to continue to operate. It has been said that, if the UN did not exist, the countries of the world would have to create another organization, maybe with another name, to do exactly what the UN does.

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🔗 <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/>  
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### **What is the UN doing to combat terrorism?**

The United Nations has long been active in the fight against international terrorism. Reflecting the determination of the international community to eliminate this threat, the Organization and its agencies have developed a wide range of international legal instruments that enable the international community to take action to suppress terrorism and bring those responsible to justice. Thirteen global conventions have been negotiated through the UN dating back to 1963, including treaties against hostage-taking, airplane hijacking, terrorist bombings and terrorism financing. A Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee oversees how Member States carry out the commitments they promised subsequent to 11 September 2001 and works to increase their capability to fight terrorism.

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*"Whether we like it or not, our generation will go down in history as one that was challenged to protect the world from terrorism".*

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

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🔗 [www.un.org/terrorism/](http://www.un.org/terrorism/)

🔗 <http://disarmament.un.org/terrorism.htm>  
.....



**19 August 2003**

A suicide attacker set off a bomb explosion in a cement truck parked outside the Canal Hotel that housed the UN Headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, killing at least 17 people including the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and wounding some 100 people.



Up close

## A Global counter-terrorism strategy

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a global counter-terrorism strategy on 8 September 2006. The strategy – in the form of a Resolution and an annexed Plan of Action – is a unique instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. Its adoption marks the first time that all Member States have agreed to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism. Important new initiatives set forth in the strategy include:

- Improving the coherence and efficiency of counter-terrorism technical assistance delivery so that all States can play their part effectively.
- Voluntarily putting in place systems of assistance that would address the needs of victims of terrorism and their families.
- Addressing the threat of bioterrorism by establishing a single comprehensive database on biological incidents, focusing on improving States' public health systems, and acknowledging the need to bring together major stakeholders to ensure that biotechnology's advances are not used for terrorist or other criminal purposes but for the public good.
- Involving civil society, regional and sub-regional organizations in the fight against terrorism and developing partnerships with the private sector to prevent terrorist attacks on particularly vulnerable targets.
- Exploring innovative means to address the growing threat of terrorists' use of the internet.
- Modernizing border and customs controls systems, and improving the security of travel documents, to prevent terrorists' travel and the movement of illicit materials.
- Enhancing cooperation to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

✓ <http://www.un.org/sc/ctc>





#### Unexploded cluster bombs in Lebanon

Some of the unexploded devices found in the de-mining of the town of Hiniyah in Lebanon by a United Nations Chinese battalion. The soldiers remove the unexploded devices, and relocate them to a safe area where they then detonate them.

## Battling Landmines

Since the 1980s, the United Nations has been addressing the problems posed by the millions of deadly landmines scattered in over 60 countries. Each year thousands of people - most of them children, women and the elderly - are maimed or killed by these "silent killers". Meanwhile, new landmines continue to be deployed in various countries around the world.

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) acts as the focal point for mine action and coordinates all mine-related activities of UN agencies, funds and programmes. The work focuses on mine action clearance, mine awareness and risk-reduction education, victim assistance and stockpile destruction.

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 [www.mineaction.org/](http://www.mineaction.org/)  
 .....

## Cluster Munitions and Mine Action

Since the antipersonnel mine-ban treaty went into force in 1999, the number of new victims each year has dropped, large tracts of land have been cleared, and the number of stockpiled mines has decreased by millions. The treaty has had a major impact on the global landmine problem. It has not, however, addressed another major problem: explosive remnants of war, which kill thousands of civilians annually.

"Explosive remnants of war" refer to abandoned explosive ordnance and unexploded ordnance, or UXO, such as cluster munitions that fail to detonate but remain volatile and dangerous, often threatening the safety of civilians. UN-supported mine-action programmes help countries eliminate the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war. An international movement seeking to limit the use of cluster munitions has gained momentum in recent years.



### FACT SHEET

#### Mine Terror

- Every 20 minutes someone is either killed or maimed by a landmine.
- At the beginning of the 20th century, nearly 80 per cent of landmine victims were military personnel. Today, nearly 80 per cent of landmine victims are civilians.
- It cost as little as \$3 to buy a landmine but as much as \$1000 to remove one.
- The countries most affected by landmines are Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Eritrea, Iraq, Mozambique, Sudan and Vietnam.

The Mine-Ban Convention forbids the possession and use of anti-personnel landmines. As of April 2007, 133 States had signed the Convention. A total of 153 States have formally agreed to be bound by the Convention.

- 76 States Parties have completed destruction of their stockpiles.
- 58 States Parties have officially declared not having a stockpile of anti-personnel mines.
- 9 States Parties are in the process of destroying their stockpiles.
- 8 States Parties are late to declare the presence or absence of stockpiles.
- 2 States Parties are scheduled to formally announce the presence or absence of stockpiles in their initial transparency measures report.



## More than keeping peace

Peacekeeping, in the traditional sense, is sending multinational troops under the UN command to keep warring factions apart. These days, UN peacekeepers do much more than just acting as a buffer between opposing forces. Here are a few examples:

- ▶ Truce supervision, ceasefire monitoring, military observation
- ▶ Demobilization and reintegration
- ▶ Disarmament
- ▶ Humanitarian assistance
- ▶ Electoral assistance
- ▶ Human rights
- ▶ Civilian police
- ▶ Mine clearance
- ▶ Cooperation with regional organizations



A young man demonstrating the method involved to deactivate a mine.

# More spending for weapons than for people

**\$1339 billion — annual world military expenditures in 2007**

*compares to:*

|                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| \$50 billion   | Provide clean, safe energy            |
| \$30 bil       | Retire developing nations' debt       |
| \$24 billion   | Prevent soil erosion                  |
| \$21 billion   | Provide health care and AIDS control  |
| \$21 billion   | Provide shelter                       |
| \$19 billion   | Eliminate starvation and malnutrition |
| \$10.5 billion | Stabilize population                  |
| \$10 billion   | Provide clean, safe water             |
| \$8 billion    | Prevent acid rain                     |
| \$8 billion    | Prevent global warming                |
| \$7 billion    | Eliminate nuclear weapons             |
| \$7 billion    | Stop deforestation                    |
| \$5 billion    | Stop ozone depletion                  |
| \$5 billion    | Refugee relief                        |
| \$5 billion    | Eliminate illiteracy                  |
| \$2 billion    | Remove landmines                      |
| \$2 billion    | Build democracy                       |

**\$1339 billion**





In 1945, more than 120,000 people were killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan) by atomic bombs.

## Disarmament

### Ensuring world safety by reducing nuclear weapons

Humankind has so far avoided a second nuclear war, due in large part to United Nations activities for disarmament, in particular, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. But the world remains a dangerous place: weapon supplies continue to grow; more people train for war every day; and the costs of the arms race continue to mount.

Consider this: In 1945, after two atomic bombs were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, the Second World War (1939-1945) was over. Since then, the world has witnessed some 150 wars. These conflicts have cost more than 20 million lives, more than 80 per cent of them civilians. Though nobody has used nuclear weapons again, we now have at least seven “nuclear Powers”. The total stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world now amounts to some 15,000 megatons, roughly equivalent to more than 1 million Hiroshima bombs.

Now consider this: Take a minute to count from 1 to 60. By the time you finish counting from 1 to 60, the world has lost 25 to 30 children. During the same time, the world has spent about \$2.55 million for military purposes- or approximately \$1339 billion annually.

The accumulation of arms and economic development both require large-scale human and material resources. But since resources are limited, pursuing either process tends to be at the expense of the other. There is growing agreement that, in the long run, the world can either continue to pursue the arms race or achieve and sustain social and economic development for the benefit of all, but it will not be able to do both.

General and complete disarmament — or gradual elimination of weapons of mass destruction — is one of the goals set by the United Nations. Its immediate objectives are to eliminate the danger of war, particularly nuclear war, and to implement measures to halt and reverse the arms race.



The Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) was the only structure left standing in the area where the first atomic bomb exploded. In 1996 it became a UNESCO World Heritage site.

.....  
 <http://disarmament.un.org>  
 .....

### Some UN actions for disarmament

- ▶ The Partial Test-Ban Treaty, 1963, prohibits nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.
- ▶ The Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1968, prohibits the spread of nuclear weapons from nuclear to non-nuclear countries.
- ▶ The Chemical Weapons Convention, 1992, prohibits use, manufacturing and stockpiling of such weapons.
- ▶ The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 1996, bans all underground nuclear-test explosions.
- ▶ The Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, 1997, prohibits the use, stock-piling, production and transfer of such mines.



# Up close

## The story of a child soldier

"I don't know how old I am," said Abu Bakar Bangura, a slight and serious young boy from the West African country of Sierra Leone. "I was very young when I was taken from my family," he explained. Abu, as he is known, is one of the 10,000 children who were abducted from their homes and forced to become soldiers by both the pro-government and the rebel forces during the 11-year civil war that tore his country apart.

After being kidnapped by the rebel group, Abu was drugged, beaten, and forced to commit terrible atrocities. Instead of a childhood of innocence and affection, he lived a life of violence and fear. Only once the fighting in Sierra Leone stopped in 2001, could these children put down their weapons and return to their homes and their childhoods. But many had forgotten how to be children and part of a family. Fighting and fending for themselves was all that they remembered.

Actor Michael Douglas of the United States, a United Nations Messenger of Peace, met Abu while at the Child Protection Care Center in Kono in the eastern district of Sierra Leone. At that point, Abu's time was running out – if his family wasn't found soon, he would be placed in foster care, an option that he was not looking forward to. Although Samuel T. Kamanda, the assistant programme manager of the International Red Cross' Child Protection Care Center, had already visited several villages trying to track down Abu's family without success, he decided to follow one of Abu's last leads – a village in another region of Sierra Leone. Michael Douglas accompanied Kamanda and Abu on the quest. After flying in on a UN helicopter, they walked for miles under the hot sun in a tiring search for Abu's village and family. Finally they came to a village, and suddenly, while waiting for the village chief, Abu heard a cry of joy and surprise. It was his mother. Abu recognized her immediately and rushed to her crying with relief and excitement.

.....  
[www.un.org/works/](http://www.un.org/works/)  
 .....

Michael Douglas and  
 Abu – screenshot  
 from the UN Works  
 documentary series  
 "What's Going On?"

.....  
[www.un.org/  
 works/goingon/  
 goinghome.html](http://www.un.org/works/goingon/goinghome.html)  
 .....

Far right photo:  
 Actor George Clooney,  
 United Nations  
 Messenger of Peace

.....  
[www.un.org/sg/mop](http://www.un.org/sg/mop)  
 .....



## Seeking Inner Peace

Photo: Arun Malhotra



*"We all have within us a centre of stillness surrounded by silence. This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer".*

Dag Hammarskjöld, 1957

### "The Meditation Room" • United Nations Headquarters, New York

In the original plan for the new Headquarters, a tiny room had been provided as a place dedicated to silence, where people could withdraw into themselves, regardless of their faith, creed or religion, but Dag Hammarskjöld wanted something more dignified. In his efforts he was supported by a group, composed of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, the "Friends of the UN Meditation Room", who combined their efforts and provided the money for a room worthy of a world organization. The work on the room began, and Mr. Hammarskjöld personally planned and supervised in every detail the creation of the "Meditation Room". The abstract mural was made by his friend and artist Bo Beskow.

 <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/meditationroom.htm>

# Q&A Team Play

## Team Play

When playing as team-mates (2 or more players on a team), team-mates can work together to arrive at an answer, but must reach a consensus before declaring an answer to the other players.

1. Does the United Nations have its own army?
2. What are the two types of peacekeeping operations under UN command?
3. UN peacekeepers are easily recognized by what piece of clothing?
4. Can peacekeeping soldiers fight for one side of a dispute?
5. What does the United Nations do to promote peace after the successful completion of a peacekeeping mission?
6. What is the Mine-ban Convention?
7. What is the UN doing to combat terrorism?

# 4

## The Millennium Development Goals

### Development facts

- The proportion of the worldwide population living in extreme poverty has fallen from one-third to one-fifth since 1990. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, while the poverty rate has leveled off, life expectancy is lower today than it was three decades ago. The percentage of underweight children is still very high in sub-Saharan Africa and in Southern Asia.
- The benefits of economic growth in the developing world have been unequally shared. Widening income inequality is of particular concern. Also, most economies have failed to provide employment opportunities to their youth, with young people more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.
- Half the population of the developing world lacks basic sanitation. Approximately 1.1 billion people have no access to clean water.
- Over half a million women still die each year from treatable and preventable complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The odds that a woman will die from these causes in sub-Saharan Africa are 1 in 16 over the course of her lifetime, compared to 1 in 3,800 in the developed world.
- The number of people dying from AIDS worldwide increased to 2.9 million in 2006, and prevention measures are failing to keep pace with the growth of the epidemic.





A girl in Karachi, Pakistan, masters the art of writing.



Children in a refugee camp, in Goma, Rwanda.

# The Millennium Development Goals

## What are the Millennium Development Goals?

At the Millennium Summit in 2000, the Member States of the United Nations agreed on eight goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that call for national action, and international cooperation, to provide access to food, education, healthcare and economic opportunities for children, women and men everywhere.

In 2005, world leaders gathered at UN Headquarters in New York for the General Assembly High-Level Summit, at which they spoke about the progress they had made nationally in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. United Nations Member States have vowed to work together to reduce poverty and eliminate hunger in developing countries, and to achieve the targets set out in the MDGs by 2015.

## What is the UN doing about fighting poverty?

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders resolved to halve, by 2015, the number of people living on less than \$1 a day, and also set targets in the fight against poverty and disease.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed specific actions that rich countries should take:

### 1. Grant free access to their markets for goods produced in poorer countries:

Many developing countries are forced to rely on exporting unprocessed agricultural products to earn income overseas. At the same time, world market prices for fuel and for manufactured and processed goods have risen. Furthermore, many developed countries have imposed steep trade restrictions on agricultural products from developing countries, making it almost impossible for them to sell their goods.

### 2. Write off foreign debts:

Over the last few years, there has been a worldwide movement pressing for the cancellation of the debts that poor countries owe to their creditors—developed country Governments, commercial banks, and multilateral international lending institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund launched a programme in 1996 known as the Debt Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), to help the world's poorest countries with crippling debts. By October 2007, there were 32 countries receiving debt relief. As a result, the money that might have been used to repay their huge debts could instead be used for health, education and other social services.

### 3. Grant more generous development assistance:

Overcoming poverty requires global efforts. In 1980, the industrialized countries pledged at the General Assembly to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national products (GNP) to official development assistance. To date, only five countries – Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden – have consistently provided 0.7 per cent of their GNP as development assistance to poor countries.

#### 4. Work with pharmaceutical companies to develop an effective and affordable vaccine against HIV:

Developing a vaccine to combat HIV/AIDS has been slow, mainly due to the enormous scientific, logistical and financial challenges involved. Since the discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as the cause of AIDS, multiple vaccines have been tested in scores of human clinical trials, with moderate success.

The World Health Organization and its partners successfully implemented a global initiative called “3 by 5”, to provide antiretroviral therapy to 3 million people with HIV/AIDS in developing countries by the end of 2005.

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✓ [www.undp.org/poverty/](http://www.undp.org/poverty/)  
✓ [www.un.org/cyberschoolbus](http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus)  
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### Towards eradicating poverty

The United Nations system assists Governments and civic groups in the developing world to address various factors that contribute to poverty. Here are a few examples:

#### China: Improve Teacher Quality in Poor Areas of Western China

Raising the standards of teacher qualifications, and continuing professional development of teachers are priorities in China’s educational development strategy. It is especially true in western China where poor rural teachers, particularly women teachers and minority teachers, find few means to improve their professional skills. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project aims at increasing educational equity and improving teachers’ abilities at the primary level in three western provinces of China through delivering high-quality, distance teacher training. So far, 45,000 teachers have been trained under this project.

#### Timor-Leste: Local Development Programme

UNDP and the UN Capital Development Fund are supporting the Government of Timor-Leste in “piloting” decentralized assemblies at the district and sub-district level in Bobonaro and Lautem, to test-run participatory planning processes, financial management and procurement procedures as well as representational arrangements at the local level.

The pilot programme is resolving practical obstacles for the future transfer of funds from central government to local governments. Simultaneously, the programme is building the capacity of local assembly members, local technical staff and the population on how to interact and respect each others’ responsibilities. It creates a downward accountability mechanism through the local assembly members who are empowered as the decision makers to determine local development priorities.

#### Ethiopia: Leadership Development Programme to combat HIV/AIDS

One of the main components of UNDP’s poverty reduction initiative is combating HIV/AIDS. The objective of the Leadership Development Programme is to promote leadership at all levels, and develop the capacity of government, civil society, development partners, communities and individuals to effectively respond to the epidemic. The programme has been successful in building partnerships through forming coalitions such as the Ethiopian Volunteer Media Professionals against AIDS and the National Coalition for Women against HIV/AIDS, uniquely positioned to mobilize women at all levels in advocating for gender equality and HIV/AIDS issues from policy level to the grassroots.



**1****ERADICATE  
EXTREME POVERTY  
AND HUNGER****2****ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL  
PRIMARY EDUCATION****3****PROMOTE GENDER  
EQUALITY AND  
EMPOWER WOMEN****4****REDUCE  
CHILD MORTALITY****5****IMPROVE MATERNAL  
HEALTH****6****COMBAT HIV/AIDS,  
MALARIA AND OTHER  
DISEASES****7****ENSURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY****8****A GLOBAL  
PARTNERSHIP FOR  
DEVELOPMENT**

# Millennium Development Goals to achieve by the year 2015

## Goal 1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- ★ By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day.
- ★ By 2015, reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

## Goal 2 Achieve universal primary education

- ★ By 2015, ensure a full course of primary schooling for all boys and girls.

## Goal 3 Promote gender equality and empower women

- ★ By 2005, eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

## Goal 4 Reduce child mortality

- ★ By 2015, reduce by two-thirds the number of children dying under the age of five.

## Goal 5 Improve maternal health

- ★ By 2015, reduce by three quarters the number of women dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

## Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- ★ By 2015, halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- ★ By 2015, halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

## Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- ★ Reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- ★ By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.
- ★ By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

## Goal 8 Develop a global partnership for development

- ★ Address the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states.
- ★ Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt repayment sustainable in the long term.
- ★ In cooperation with the private sector, make available to developing countries the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

## What is the connection between the environment and development?

The environment is everything that surrounds us. It is the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil that grows all our food, and all living beings. Development is what we do with these resources to improve our lives. All over the world we do things that we think will make our lives better, but everything we do changes us and our environment.

Sometimes we do not see how we are connected to the Earth and to each other, but the connections are there. Medicines that save lives in Germany may depend on plants that grow in the forests of Costa Rica. Pollution from automobiles in London or Mexico City may affect the climate in Rabat or Tokyo. We now know that carbon dioxide and other gases from factories and cars cause the atmosphere to heat up. This rise in temperature may change the world's climate. Forests help free the air of carbon dioxide, but many forests are being cut down for their wood or to clear land for farms.

## What is sustainable development?

It means that development should meet our current needs without diminishing the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In other words, we must use our resources wisely. Sustainable development requires us to conserve more and waste less. In industrialized countries, many people live beyond nature's means. For example, one person in a very rich country uses as much energy as 80 people in a very poor country. Over-consumption leads to waste, which pollutes our environment and uses up our resources.

Crushing poverty and growing populations also create great pressure on the environment. When land and forests, which provide food, natural resources and employment, are exhausted, people find it harder, and sometimes impossible, to survive. Many go to cities, crowding into unhealthy and unsafe slums.

If poor people are forced to destroy their environment to survive, all countries will suffer the consequences.



## What does the UN do to protect our environment?

The natural world around us is a fragile place that requires care, respect and knowledge by all people in all nations. Air pollution, waterborne diseases, toxic chemicals and natural disasters are just some of the challenges the environment presents for mankind.

The UN plays a key role in shaping international action to protect our environment, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) leads its global efforts. The UN conducts research, monitors the state of the environment and advises Governments on ways to preserve their natural resources. Most importantly, it brings Governments together to make international laws to solve particular environmental problems.

## Some UN actions to protect the environment

- ▶ The Kyoto Protocol to the Convention on Climate Change (1997) aims to slow global warming. It became a legally binding treaty in 2004. It requires countries to cut harmful green house gases by 5.2% by 2012.
- ▶ The Declaration and Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994) calls on countries to take special action in the interest of 40 small island developing States to promote their social and economic development. Many of these small islands have very limited resources and have been unable to reap the benefits of globalization.

# Up close

## Tony taps the coconut: Making sustainable development work



In the middle of the South Pacific, the island nation of Vanuatu has a precious resource that could help it overcome trouble in paradise. Tony Deamer, an Australian-born mechanic and environmental entrepreneur, believes that coconuts hold the promise of a better future for Vanuatu's people. There are plenty of coconuts on the 80 beautiful tropical islands that make up Vanuatu, but the global price for

coconuts fluctuates, and as a result, farmers cannot count on a steady income and the local economy suffers.

Tony has a solution. He has successfully used pure coconut oil as an alternative to petroleum in automotive diesel engines. The result is both environmentally friendly and good for the local economy. Deamer believes that if Vanuatu embraces coconut oil as a fuel, the local demand for copra, or dried coconut meat, would increase, stimulate the economy and create more jobs. Copra is an excellent animal feed, its fibre has many uses and coconut shells can be converted into charcoal.

Tony's project has the potential to lessen the need for imported fuel and put much needed cash in the hands of local coconut growers. Currently, Vanuatu has to import all of its diesel fuel, costing \$12 million a year, which is a lot of money for a tiny island nation with limited resources and purchasing power. The Government in Vanuatu sees his project's potential and has given some support.



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[www.un.org/works/smallislands/vanuatu.html](http://www.un.org/works/smallislands/vanuatu.html)  
.....

- ▶ The Convention to Combat Desertification (1994) seeks to resolve problems of overcultivation, deforestation, overgrazing and poor irrigation. One quarter of the Earth's land is threatened by desertification. The livelihoods of over one billion people in more than 100 countries are jeopardized, as farming and grazing land become less productive.
- ▶ The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) seeks to protect and conserve the wide variety of animal and plant life that is essential for human survival.

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🔗 [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)  
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## ✓ FACT SHEET

### Goodbye to Small Pox & Polio

Measles, tuberculosis, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and polio are six of the deadliest diseases affecting children in developing countries. Today, some 3 million people in the developing world, who would have been paralysed, are walking because they have been immunized against polio, as a result of efforts by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Smallpox, another deadly disease, has now been eradicated worldwide. Ali Maalin of Merka town, Somalia, is the last recorded case of smallpox. In October 1977, he suffered a mild form of the disease and quickly recovered. Not sure whether this was the end of smallpox, the WHO offered a reward of \$1,000 to anyone who could identify a case of smallpox. None was reported. Two years later, in December 1979, WHO declared that smallpox had been eradicated from the world.

### Water, water . . .

Water is such a basic necessity that it is often called the source of life. When contaminated, water can become dangerous and cause serious illness. In many countries, people have limited access to safe drinking water. As a result, at least 4 million children die every year in developing countries from water-borne diseases. In 1980, the United Nations launched an international campaign to bring safe drinking water to everyone by the year 2000. This campaign has already brought safe drinking water to over 1.3 billion people worldwide. Another 1.9 billion people have been helped with sanitation facilities.



### Waking up to a Disaster

The United Nations jumped into action to assist the survivors of the December 2004 tsunami in East Asia. Within three days, a UN disaster assessment team had arrived in the worst-affected area, the Indonesian province of Aceh, where some 165,000 people had died and 600,000 were made homeless. In the following six months, the UN fed two million people, vaccinated more than 1.2 million children and employed more than 30,000 people in

“cash-to-work” programmes in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and other areas. More than 561,000 children were learning again with the help of “school in a box” education start-up kits, and fishermen and farmers were being helped to rebuild their businesses. UN agencies continue to work to promote recovery and reconstruction.

# Up close

## Rethinking globalization

### **What is it?**

Globalization is an inevitable phenomenon in human history that has brought the world closer through the exchange of goods and products, information, knowledge and culture. Over the last few decades, the pace of this global integration has become much faster and dramatic because of unprecedented advancements in technology, communications, science, transport and industry.

While globalization is a catalyst for and a consequence of human progress, it is also a messy process that requires adjustment and creates significant challenges and problems.

### **Why should I care?**

Globalization has sparked one of the most highly charged debates of the past decade.

When people criticize the effects of globalization, they generally refer to economic integration. Economic integration occurs when countries lower barriers such as import tariffs and open their economies up to investment and trade with the rest of the world. These critics complain that inequalities in the current global trading system hurt developing countries.

Supporters of globalization say countries—like China, Vietnam, India and Uganda—that have opened up to the world economy have significantly reduced poverty.

Critics argue that the process has exploited people in developing countries, caused massive disruptions and produced few benefits.

For all countries to be able to reap the benefits of globalization, the international community must continue working to reduce distortions in international trade (cutting agricultural subsidies and trade barriers) that favour developed countries and to create a more fair system.

Some countries have profited from globalization

- India: Cut its poverty rate in half in the past two decades.
- China: Reform led to the largest poverty reduction in history. The number of rural poor fell from 250 million in 1978 to 34 million in 1999.

### **But others have not**

- Many countries in Africa have failed to share in the gains of globalization. Their exports have remained confined to a narrow range of primary commodities.
- Some experts suggest poor policies and infrastructure, weak institutions and corrupt governance have marginalized a number of countries.
- Others believe that geographical and climatic disadvantages have locked some countries out of global growth.

For more:



[www.youthink.worldbank.org](http://www.youthink.worldbank.org)



# Millennium Development Goals: 2007 Progress Chart

| Goals and Targets                                      | Africa                  |                        | Asia                    |                    |                     |                         | Oceania                 | Latin America & Caribbean | Commonwealth of Independent States |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                                        | Northern                | Sub-Saharan            | Eastern                 | South-Eastern      | Southern            | Western                 |                         |                           | Europe                             | Asia               |
| GOAL 1   Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger          |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Reduce extreme poverty by half                         | low poverty             | very high poverty      | moderate poverty        | moderate poverty   | very high poverty   | low poverty             | ---                     | moderate poverty          | low poverty                        | low poverty        |
| Reduce hunger by half                                  | very low hunger         | very high hunger       | moderate hunger         | moderate hunger    | high hunger         | moderate hunger         | moderate hunger         | moderate hunger           | very low hunger                    | high hunger        |
| GOAL 2   Achieve universal primary education           |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Universal primary schooling                            | high enrolment          | low enrolment          | high enrolment          | high enrolment     | high enrolment      | moderate enrolment      | moderate enrolment      | high enrolment            | high enrolment                     | high enrolment     |
| GOAL 3   Promote gender equality and empower women     |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Equal girls' enrolment in primary school               | close to parity         | almost close to parity | parity                  | parity             | close to parity     | close to parity         | close to parity         | parity                    | parity                             | parity             |
| Women's share of paid employment                       | low share               | medium share           | high share              | medium share       | low share           | low share               | medium share            | high share                | high share                         | high share         |
| Women's equal representation in national parliaments   | very low representation | low representation     | moderate representation | low representation | low representation  | very low representation | very low representation | moderate representation   | low representation                 | low representation |
| GOAL 4   Reduce child mortality                        |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Reduce mortality of under-five-year-olds by two thirds | low mortality           | very high mortality    | low mortality           | moderate mortality | high mortality      | moderate mortality      | moderate mortality      | low mortality             | low mortality                      | moderate mortality |
| Measles immunization                                   | high coverage           | low coverage           | moderate coverage       | moderate coverage  | low coverage        | high coverage           | low coverage            | high coverage             | high coverage                      | high coverage      |
| GOAL 5   Improve maternal health                       |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters*           | moderate mortality      | very high mortality    | low mortality           | high mortality     | very high mortality | moderate mortality      | high mortality          | moderate mortality        | low mortality                      | low mortality      |
| GOAL 6   Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases   |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Halt and reverse spread of HIV/AIDS                    | low prevalence          | very high prevalence   | low prevalence          | low prevalence     | moderate prevalence | low prevalence          | moderate prevalence     | moderate prevalence       | moderate prevalence                | low prevalence     |
| Halt and reverse spread of malaria*                    | low risk                | high risk              | moderate risk           | moderate risk      | moderate risk       | low risk                | low risk                | moderate risk             | low risk                           | low risk           |
| Halt and reverse spread of tuberculosis                | low mortality           | high mortality         | moderate mortality      | moderate mortality | moderate mortality  | low mortality           | moderate mortality      | low mortality             | moderate mortality                 | moderate mortality |
| GOAL 7   Ensure environmental sustainability           |                         |                        |                         |                    |                     |                         |                         |                           |                                    |                    |
| Reverse loss of forests**                              | low forest cover        | medium forest cover    | medium forest cover     | high forest cover  | medium forest cover | low forest cover        | high forest cover       | high forest cover         | high forest cover                  | low forest cover   |
| Halve proportion without improved drinking water       | high coverage           | low coverage           | moderate coverage       | moderate coverage  | moderate coverage   | high coverage           | low coverage            | high coverage             | high coverage                      | moderate coverage  |



| Goals and Targets                                        | Africa                               |                                       | Asia                             |                                      |                                  |                                      | Oceania                              | Latin America & Caribbean            | Commonwealth of Independent States |                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                                                          | Northern                             | Sub-Saharan                           | Eastern                          | South-Eastern                        | Southern                         | Western                              |                                      |                                      | Europe                             | Asia                                 |
| GOAL 7   Ensure environmental sustainability (continued) |                                      |                                       |                                  |                                      |                                  |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                    |                                      |
| Halve proportion without sanitation                      | moderate coverage                    | very low coverage                     | very low coverage                | low coverage                         | very low coverage                | moderate coverage                    | low coverage                         | moderate coverage                    | moderate coverage                  | moderate coverage                    |
| Improve the lives of slum-dwellers                       | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers | very high proportion of slum-dwellers | high proportion of slum-dwellers | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers | high proportion of slum-dwellers | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers | low proportion of slum-dwellers    | moderate proportion of slum-dwellers |
| GOAL 8   Develop a global partnership for development    |                                      |                                       |                                  |                                      |                                  |                                      |                                      |                                      |                                    |                                      |
| Youth unemployment**                                     | very high unemployment               | high unemployment                     | low unemployment                 | high unemployment                    | moderate unemployment            | very high unemployment               | low unemployment                     | high unemployment                    | high unemployment                  | high unemployment                    |
| Internet users                                           | moderate access                      | very low access                       | moderate access                  | moderate access                      | low access                       | moderate access                      | low access                           | high access                          | moderate access                    | moderate access                      |

Compiled by: Statistics Division, UN DESA.

Country experiences in each region may differ significantly from the regional average. For the regional groupings and country data, see <http://mdgs.un.org>.

Sources: United Nations, based on data and estimates provided by: Food and Agriculture Organization; Inter-Parliamentary Union; International Labour Organization; International Telecommunication Unit; UNESCO; UNICEF; World Health Organization; UNAIDS; UN-Habitat; World Bank – based on statistics available as of June 2007.

The progress chart operates on two levels. The words in each box tell the current rate of compliance with each target. The colours show the trend, towards meeting the target by 2015 or not. See legend below:

- Target already met or very close to being met.
- Target is expected to be met by 2015 if prevailing trends persist, or the problem that this target is designed to address is not a serious concern in the region.
- Target is not expected to be met by 2015.
- No progress, or a deterioration or reversal.
- Insufficient data.

\* The available data for maternal mortality and malaria do not allow a trend analysis. Progress in the chart has been assessed by the responsible agencies on the basis of proxy indicators.

\*\* The assessment is based on a new methodology and therefore not comparable with previous assessments.

## URBANIZATION AND MDGS

In 2008, for the first time in history, more than half of the world's population – 3.3 billion people – will be living in urban areas. This number is expected to swell to almost 5 billion by 2030. In 1800, only 2% of people lived in cities and towns. In 1950, only 30% of the world population was urban.

Though mega-cities (more than 10 million people) will continue to grow, most people will be living in cities of 500,000 or fewer. Globally, future population growth will take place in cities, nearly all of it in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The battle for the Millennium Development Goals to halve extreme poverty by 2015 will be won or lost in the cities of the developing world.

For more:

.....  
 [www.unfpa.org](http://www.unfpa.org)

.....  
 [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)  
 .....



## ✓ FACT SHEET

### Saving the Temples of Nubia

Egypt is the home of many ancient temples and monuments, including those at Nubia. The construction of the Aswan Dam on the River Nile threatened the existence of these 5,000-year-old monuments. In 1960, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched an international campaign to save them from destruction. But this could be done only by removing the monuments from the flooded area and taking them to a higher place. This is exactly what the international experts, brought together by the United Nations, did: they cut the monuments into blocks and then reassembled them at a safer place. It took them 20 years of hard work to accomplish this spectacular job.

By 2008 the United Nations placed over 851 cultural, natural and mixed properties onto its World Heritage List. Such diverse sites as the Pyramids of Egypt, the Grand Canyon in the United States, and the Taj Mahal of India are included in the list. Because of their outstanding universal value, these sites are considered to be mankind's common heritage. Some 180 nations have signed a treaty agreeing to cooperate and contribute to the protection of these properties.

UNESCO has helped to protect many such historic monuments in over 80 countries, including the Acropolis in Greece; the Angkor Wat Temple in Cambodia; Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia and the Borobudur Shrine in Indonesia.

 [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

## Q&A Team Play

### Team Play

When playing as team-mates (2 or more players on a team), team-mates can work together to arrive at an answer, but must reach a consensus before declaring an answer to the other players.

1. What is sustainable development?
2. What are the Millennium Development Goals?
3. How would you define poverty?
4. What is the Kyoto Protocol?
5. How have some countries benefitted from globalization?
6. What does the United Nations do to reduce poverty?
7. What is the World Heritage list?
8. What kind of emergency relief did the UN provide to the December 2004 tsunami victims?

# 5

## Human Rights

### Some facts about human rights

- In 2007, 113 million school-age children were not in school—97% of them in developing countries. Of the world's estimated 854 million illiterate adults, 544 million are women.
- An estimated 171 million children – of whom 73 million are under the age of 10 – are working with hazardous chemicals and pesticides in agriculture, with dangerous machinery or in mines.
- An estimated 8.4 million children are forced into bonded labor, prostitution, pornography, armed conflict or other illicit activities.
- The UN has successfully negotiated two Optional Protocols to its 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child—by which States parties agree to ban the participation of children under 18 in armed conflict; and agree to prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Both came into force in early 2002
- Women tend to face higher rates of violence because discrimination on the basis of gender frequently renders them among the powerless members of society. Racial discrimination often results in violence. Women who face discrimination based on both race and gender are thus doubly at risk of violence.





Four-year old boy on the garbage dump in Sao Paulo.



A group of children are at the International Rescue Committee kindergarden at the Hamadiya internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp in Zalingei, West Darfur, Sudan.

# Human Rights

## What is meant by human rights?

Human rights are those rights which are essential for us to live as human beings. Without human rights, we cannot fully develop and use our human qualities, our intelligence, our talent and our spirituality.

The United Nations set a common standard on human rights for all nations when, in 1948, it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By this Declaration, Governments accepted the obligation to ensure that all human beings, rich and poor, strong and weak, male and female, of all races and religions, are treated equally. The Declaration is not part of binding international law, but due to widespread acceptance by countries in the world, it has gained

great moral weight.

The UN has also adopted many international human rights treaties, legally binding nations to guarantee their citizens' social, economic and political rights. The most important of these treaties are two International Covenants — one on economic, social and cultural rights and the other on civil and political rights. These treaties, together with Optional Protocols, are known as the International Bill of Human Rights.



Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States, holds a poster-size copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She was one of the authors of the Declaration in 1948.

 <http://www.un.org/rights/>

## Which UN body has responsibility for human rights?

The Human Rights Council was established in June 2006 to replace the Human Rights Commission which operated from 1946 to 2006. Unlike the Commission, the new Council is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. This makes it directly accountable to the full membership of the United Nations. The Council is the main United Nations forum for dialogue and cooperation on human rights. It is administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.



Inaugural session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, 19 June 2006.



**ALL  
human  
beings  
are  
born  
FREE  
and  
EQUAL  
in  
dignity**

## Every child has the right to:

- ✿ a name and a nationality;
- ✿ protection from all forms of violence, including sexual exploitation;

- ✿ education;
- ✿ freedom of thought.



### Do children enjoy human rights?

Children enjoy the same rights as adults. However, because they are minors, they need special protection. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, sets forth the individual rights that any person under 18 years of age requires to develop his or her full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. More countries have ratified the Child Rights Convention than any other human rights treaty in history – 193 States are Parties to the Convention as of May 2010.

### What other human rights laws and agreements have been negotiated by the UN?

The United Nations has helped negotiate over 80 human rights treaties and declarations, dealing with the rights of women, children, disabled persons, minorities, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups. Together, these agreements have helped create a “culture of human rights” throughout the world, proving to be a powerful tool in curbing abuses.

### Some human rights conventions :

- ▶ The Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide (1948) defines genocide as the committing of certain acts with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group;
- ▶ The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984) holds States responsible for preventing torture and makes it legally punishable;
- ▶ The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966) defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”, and obliges States to eliminate racial discrimination;
- ▶ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) is often described as an international bill



# All people have the right to:

of rights for women. It defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex and encourages governments to take measures to stop discrimination.

- ▶ The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) defines the rights of refugees, especially their right not to be forcibly returned to countries where they are at risk, and makes provisions for various aspects of their everyday lives, including their right to work, education, public assistance and social security, as well as their right to travel documents.

## Other than adopting international laws, how does the UN protect human rights?

The UN promotes respect for human rights in several ways, including:

- ▶ Monitoring the human rights records of nations. It has set up the Human Rights Council which has the authority to recommend that the General Assembly suspend the rights and privileges of any Council Member that it decides has persistently committed gross and systematic violations of human rights. This process of suspension would require a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly.
- ▶ Through its six committees, which may call upon the Governments to respond to allegations; they may also adopt decisions and make them public, along with criticisms or recommendations;
- ▶ Appointing experts known as special rapporteurs or representatives who gather facts, visit prisons, interview victims, and make recommendations on how to increase respect for human rights;
- ▶ Establishing working groups to investigate such issues as arbitrary detention. When their reports highlight human rights violations, they help to mobilize international attention;
- ▶ Providing technical assistance to strengthen national and regional institutions, such as courts and school systems.
- ▶ Holding international conferences to discuss human rights issues and ask Governments to commit themselves publicly on human rights issues.

## Who are the special rapporteurs and working groups?

Special rapporteurs and working groups on human rights are on the front lines in the protection of human rights. They investigate violations and intervene in individual cases and emergency situations, in what are referred to as "special procedures". Human rights experts are independent. They serve in their personal capacity for a maximum of six years. The number of such experts has grown steadily over the years. There are currently over 30 special procedure mandates.

In preparing their reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, these experts use all reliable resources, including individual complaints and infor-

life,  
liberty and  
security;

freedom of  
expression;

freedom  
from  
slavery;

fair trial;

equal  
treatment  
before the  
law;



.....➤  
**freedom of  
movement;**  
.....

**a  
nationality;**  
.....

**contract a  
marriage  
and found  
a family;**  
.....

**work;**  
.....

**equal pay  
for equal  
work.**  
.....

mation from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A significant portion of their research is done locally, where they meet both with authorities and victims, and gather on-site evidence. Their reports are made public to emphasize the responsibility of Governments for the protection of human rights.

.....  
🔗 [www.ohchr.org/](http://www.ohchr.org/)  
.....

### **Can individuals complain about violations of their rights?**

Yes. Optional protocols to some UN treaties allow individuals to lodge complaints if the Government in question has ratified the protocols. Under a confidential communications procedure, allegations of gross and systematic violations of human rights can also be submitted to the UN if domestic remedies have been exhausted.

There is a Human Rights website to go to if one has human rights complaints or concerns: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/complaints.htm>. The email address is: CP@ohchr.org

### **Who created the International Criminal Court? Why do we need such a court?**

In 1998, at a conference in Rome, 120 nations agreed to establish a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). The court has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for some of the most serious offences, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. As of 1 June 2008, 106 countries were partners to the Rome Statute of the ICC.



There are real needs for such a court. In some countries, in times of conflict, there may be no courts capable of dealing properly with war crimes. It may also be that the Government in power is unwilling to prosecute its own citizens, especially if they are high-ranking officials. The ICC provides a just option in such cases.

.....  
🔗 [www.icc-cpi.int/](http://www.icc-cpi.int/)  
.....

### **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples**

On 13 December 2007, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Indigenous Peoples. It is a triumph for justice and human dignity following more than two decades of negotiations between Governments and Indigenous peoples' representatives.

The Declaration establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world's Indigenous peoples. It addresses both individual and collective rights; cultural rights and identity; rights to education, health, employment, language; and others. It outlaws discrimination against Indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them. The Declaration also ensures their right to remain distinct and to pursue their own priorities in economic, social and cultural development. It explicitly encourages harmonious and cooperative relations between States and Indigenous peoples.



## ✓ FACT SHEET

### Sending Girls to School

Everywhere in the world, girls face discrimination. They often receive less food than boys do and, in many countries, they work long hours even when they are only 5 or 6 years old. Eighty million girls aged 6 to 11 do not go to school. The United Nations has adopted a treaty, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which asks Governments to spend more money to educate girls. Thanks in part to the United Nations, today 77 per cent of primary-school-age children are enrolled in school, a big jump from less than 50 per cent in 1960. This is progress, but a lot remains to be done.

## Up close



### Children who work

Until recently, 12-year-old Leandra Cristina Da Silva worked hard for a living. Instead of playing in her backyard or attending school, she laboured seven days a week, coated with dust and grime in the filth of the Olinda garbage dump on the outskirts of the coastal town of Recife in northern Brazil. Although she lives close to the sea, with Marcia, her mother, and her brother and sister, Leandra had never seen the Atlantic Ocean. Each day for Leandra was the same: after finishing her chores at home, she left every morning to work along-

side her mother for 10 hours or more each day, scavenging for cans and bottles to sell. After an exhausting day at the dump, she returned to a home with no running water and crawled into a bed that she shared with her mother and two siblings.

Working at the Olinda dump is mind-numbing and dangerous. When the supermarket truck appears, men, women and children scramble to get the best garbage. Yet for all the drudgery and hazards, Leandra barely earned the equivalent of \$3 a day selling the collected bottles to a middleman, who makes money exploiting child workers. It is illegal for children in Brazil to work in such dangerous conditions, but the pressures of poverty force parents to take risks to feed their families.

Recognizing that education is the best way to fight poverty, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN International Labour Organization have joined forces with the Brazilian Government to open new doors for children, putting them back in school where they belong. The Bolsa Escola ("School Scholarship") programme makes cash and in-kind grants to families to replace the income children bring in.

Though Leandra was proud to help her family, she longed to go to school. Her mother, Marcia, had worked all her life and did not get any schooling. She did not really understand the bolsa and did not believe it would replace the money her daughter earned at the dump to help support the family. But then one day, good fortune smiled on Leandra. With the help of UNICEF Project Officer Ana Maria Azevedo and Susan Sarandon, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Leandra was awarded a bolsa. She was thrilled to make a new start.

Adapted from: UN Works



[www.un.org/works/goingon/labor/leandra\\_story.html](http://www.un.org/works/goingon/labor/leandra_story.html)



### Helping the victims of torture

The police arrived in the middle of the night. They fired tear gas, kicked down the door and began assaulting the people in the house. A small group of people had gathered to mourn the death of a 15-year-old boy who had died in police custody. Everyone in the house, including three boys between the ages of 11 and 15, was forced into police vans.

The event described above is just an illustration of torture by the State, still practiced in many countries. The United Nations wants this to stop.

In 1984 the UN adopted the Convention against Torture. A 10-member Committee against Torture periodically examines reports from countries that have ratified the Convention. The UN has also set up a voluntary fund for victims of torture. It provides humanitarian, legal and financial assistance to torture victims and their children.



### The UN fights apartheid: a crime against humanity

Apartheid, in the Afrikaans language of South Africa, means separateness. South Africa, though 80 per cent of its people are black, had long been ruled by the country's tiny white minority. They imposed the policy of apartheid, racially segregating the country and depriving the black population of the very basic human rights. The United Nations, condemning apartheid as a "crime against humanity", carried out a sustained campaign against this policy for more than three decades. Apartheid finally ended in April 1994 after the United

Nations assisted in and supervised the holding of the country's first free and multiracial election. Nelson Mandela, speaking before the United Nations (left), who was jailed for decades by the apartheid regime, became the first President of a new, racially-integrated South Africa.

## Q&A Team Play

### Team Play

When playing as team-mates (2 or more players on a team), team-mates can work together to arrive at an answer, but must reach a consensus before declaring an answer to the other players.

1. What are human rights?
2. When was the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted? What does it entail?
3. Which UN body has primary responsibility for human rights?
4. Other than adopting international laws, how does the UN protect human rights?
5. What is the function of a special rapporteur?
6. What does apartheid mean?
7. What does the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples say?

# 6

## Frequently asked questions









# Frequently asked questions

## **How can individuals support the UN? Can they join the Organization as members?**

No, only independent countries with international recognition can become members of the UN. However, individuals can support the work of the United Nations through international and local non-governmental organizations. Some of them collaborate with the UN Department of Public Information and provide the UN with valuable links to people around the world.

For more information:

.....  
 <http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/index.html>  
.....

There are United Nations Associations (UNA-USA and WFUNA) in more than 100 countries, often with many local chapters. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has national committees in many countries, spreading awareness about UNICEF's programmes and raising the funds to help make them a reality. Some 3,600 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) clubs, centres and associations (associated with UNESCO) in over 90 countries undertake activities in the areas of education, science, culture and communication. Major contact points are the UN information centres and services all over the world.

If you have a skill in such fields as agriculture, medicine, education, information technology, vocational training, the promotion of human rights, industry and population – as well as the necessary flexibility and commitment – the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme may place you, for a one- to two-year period, with an appropriate UN development project in a developing country.

Contact UN Volunteers, P.O. Box 260111, D-53153, Bonn, Germany • Tel: 49 (228) 815-2000; Fax: 49 (228) 815-2001 • Email: [information@unvolunteers.org](mailto:information@unvolunteers.org)

.....  
[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)  
.....

## **I want to continue my studies at a foreign university. Can the UN provide me with financial assistance?**

The United Nations does not provide financial assistance to students. You can find some information about scholarships offered by higher education institutions and international organizations in a guide published by UNESCO, entitled "Study Abroad". To purchase a copy of the Study Abroad catalogue, please write to: UNESCO Publishing, Promotion and Sales Division, 1 rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15 (France) or order on-line at:

.....  
 <http://www.unesco.org/publishing>  
.....

## **Does the UN accept student interns?**

The United Nations offers an unpaid internship programme for graduate students only at its New York Headquarters. It consists of three two-month periods throughout the year. For more information go to:

.....  
 <http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/sds/internsh/index.htm>  
.....

### Where can I get information about a UN Member country's position on various current issues?

You can obtain such information from the Permanent Mission to the United Nations of the country concerned. The list of websites for the Member States can be found at:

 <http://www.un.int/index-en/webs.html>

### What is United Nations Day?

It is the birthday of the United Nations. It falls on 24 October, the day that the Organization came into being in 1945 after a majority of its original Members formally accepted their membership by agreeing to the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, 24 October is celebrated all over the world as United Nations Day.

### Is information about the UN available through the Internet?

The UN has its own home page at

 [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



### Is there anything on the UN website designed especially for young people?

The United Nations CyberSchoolBus has been set up to provide materials about the Organization for children and teachers.

 [www.un.org/Cyberschoolbus](http://www.un.org/Cyberschoolbus)

### Does the UN have an anthem?

The UN does not have an official anthem or hymn. The General Assembly recognized the need for an official song and reserved the right to select and adopt one. So far, no decision has been taken. In 1970, Maestro Pablo Casals of Spain set music to a hymn written in honour of the UN by English poet W. H. Auden. This hymn was performed on UN Day in 1971 at UN Headquarters.

### Where can I write for more information about the United Nations?

You can write to:

Visitors Services, Department of Public Information,  
GA-57, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA.

E-Mail: [inquiries@un.org](mailto:inquiries@un.org)

Phone: (212) 963-4475

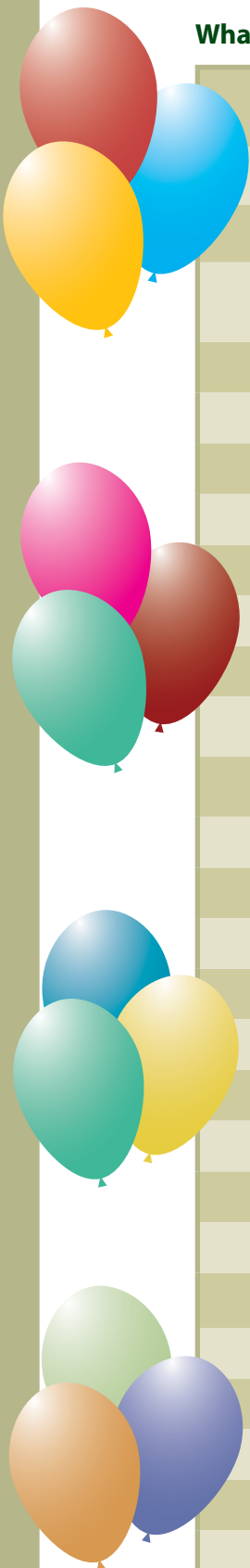
Fax: (212) 963-0071

 [www.un.org/geninfo/faq](http://www.un.org/geninfo/faq)



Maestro Pablo Casals of Spain conducting the premiere of his "Hymn to the United Nations" at UN Headquarters, 24 October 1971.

## What are some of the special days celebrated by the United Nations?



|                     |                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>27 January</b>   | <b>International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust</b>                 |
| <b>8 March</b>      | <b>International Women's Day</b>                                                                    |
| <b>21 March</b>     | <b>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</b>                               |
| <b>25 March</b>     | <b>International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade</b> |
| <b>7 April</b>      | <b>World Health Day</b>                                                                             |
| <b>3 May</b>        | <b>World Press Freedom Day</b>                                                                      |
| <b>15 May</b>       | <b>International Day of Families</b>                                                                |
| <b>21 May</b>       | <b>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</b>                                |
| <b>29 May</b>       | <b>International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers</b>                                             |
| <b>31 May</b>       | <b>World No-Tobacco Day</b>                                                                         |
| <b>5 June</b>       | <b>World Environment Day</b>                                                                        |
| <b>20 June</b>      | <b>World Refugee Day</b>                                                                            |
| <b>26 June</b>      | <b>International Day against Drug Abuse</b>                                                         |
| <b>11 July</b>      | <b>World Population Day</b>                                                                         |
| <b>9 August</b>     | <b>International Day of the World's Indigenous People</b>                                           |
| <b>8 September</b>  | <b>International Literacy Day</b>                                                                   |
| <b>21 September</b> | <b>International Day of Peace</b>                                                                   |
| <b>1 October</b>    | <b>International Day of Older Persons</b>                                                           |
| <b>2 October</b>    | <b>International Day of Non-Violence</b>                                                            |
| <b>17 October</b>   | <b>International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</b>                                             |
| <b>24 October</b>   | <b>United Nations Day</b>                                                                           |
| <b>16 November</b>  | <b>International Day of Tolerance</b>                                                               |
| <b>20 November</b>  | <b>Universal Children's Day</b>                                                                     |
| <b>25 November</b>  | <b>International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women</b>                              |
| <b>29 November</b>  | <b>International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People</b>                                  |
| <b>1 December</b>   | <b>World AIDS Day</b>                                                                               |
| <b>3 December</b>   | <b>International Day of Disabled Persons</b>                                                        |
| <b>9 December</b>   | <b>International Anti-Corruption Day</b>                                                            |
| <b>10 December</b>  | <b>Human Rights Day</b>                                                                             |
| <b>18 December</b>  | <b>International Migrant's Day</b>                                                                  |





## Did You Know?

- Since 1945, the UN has assisted in negotiating more than 170 peace settlements that have ended regional conflicts.
- The United Nations played a role in bringing about independence in more than 80 countries that are now sovereign nations.
- Over 500 multinational treaties – on human rights, terrorism, international crime, refugees, disarmament, commodities and the oceans – have been enacted through the efforts of the United Nations.
- The World Food Programme, the world's largest humanitarian agency, reaches on average 90 million hungry people in 80 countries every year.
- An estimated 90 per cent of global conflict-related deaths since 1990 have been civilians, and 80 percent of these have been women and children.
- If each poor person on the planet had the same energy-rich lifestyle as an average person in Germany or the United Kingdom, four planets would be needed to safely cope with the pollution. That figure rises to nine planets when compared with the average of the United States or Canada.