

International Organisations

FACTS THAT MATTER

1. International organisations help countries to cooperate to create better living conditions all over the world and provide common platform to discuss contentious issues and find peaceful solutions, by a mechanism, rules and bureaucracy.
2. The United Nations was founded as a successor to 'League of Nations' immediately after the Second World Charter by 51 states on 20th October 1945 with the headquarter at New York.
3. The UN has 192 member states to prevent international conflicts to facilitate co-operation. The UN's main organs are the General Assembly and Security Council. The UNSC consists of five permanent members i.e. the US, Russia, France, China and the UK, who enjoy Veto Power. The UN's representative head is Secretary General.
4. The UN consists of many specialised agencies to deal with social and economic issues like WHO, UNDP, UNHRG, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNESCO to work in an efficient manner and to bring world together.
5. After the Cold War, some of the changes occurred which affected the functioning of the UN
 - i. e. collapse of Soviet Union, emergence of China and India as rising powers, entry of new members, and confrontations with the challenges like genocide, civil war, ethnic conflict, terrorism, nuclear proliferation etc.
6. They faced two kinds of reforms over the time i.e. organisations structure and processes and a review of the issues that fall within jurisdiction of UN as why veto powers to permanent members only, dominance of powerful countries and to play more effective role in peace and security missions etc.
7. In 1992, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution over the reform of UN complaining no longer representation by

contemporary powers, dominance of few countries based on western values etc. Following these in January 1997, Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General initiated on "How the UN should be reformed?"

8. Since 1997 onwards, a new member to be added to the UN should fulfil the parameters of being a major economic and military power, contributor to UN Budget, a populous one, should respect democracy and human rights and to make council more representative.

9. In September 2005, the heads of all member states of the UN took the steps to make the UN more relevant by creating peace building commissions, human rights council, agreement to achieve Millennium Development Goals, condemnation of terrorism, creation of democracy fund and an agreement to wind up Trusteeship Council.

10. India is a big supporter of restructuring of the UN to promote development and cooperation among states, to composition of Security Council and to include more representation in council for its political support.

11. Being a citizen of India, we would firmly support India's candidature for the permanent membership of UN Security Council on the grounds to be second most populous country, largest democracy, initiations in the UN, economic emergence and regular financial contributor to the UN.

12. Some countries question India's inclusion as permanent members in the Security Council on the basis of its troubled relationship with Pakistan, nuclear weapon capabilities, and if India included, some emerging powers (Brazil, Germany, Japan, South Africa) will also be accommodated. France and the USA advocate that Africa and South America must be represented for they do not have any representation in the present structure.

13. The UN can not serve as a balance against US dominance because the US is the only Superpower after 1991 and may ignore any international organisation economically and militarily, its veto

power also can stop any move damaging its interests as well as enjoys a considerable say in the choice of Secretary General of the UN.

14. Despite the above mentioned strong activities of the US, the UN serves a purpose in bringing the world together in dealing with conflicts and social and economic issues. The UN provides a space within which arguments against specific US attitude and policies are heard and compromised.

UN'S SIGNIFICANT AGENCIES

1. International Monetary Fund (IMF)

(a) At the international level, overseas financial institutions and regulations.

(b) It consists of 180 members. Out of them, G-8 members enjoy more powers i.e. the US, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Canada and Russia except China and Saudi Arabia.

(c) The US alone enjoys 16.75% voting rights.

2. World Bank

(a) It was created in 1944.

(b) It works for human development, agriculture and rural development, environmental protection, infrastructure and governance and provides loans and grants to developing countries.

(c) It is criticised for setting the economic agenda of poorer nations, attaching stringent conditions to its loans and forcing free market reforms.

3. WTO-World Trade Organisation

(a) An international organisation to set the rules for global trade which was set up in 1995 as a successor to General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and has 157 members, (as on 1 September 2012)

(b) Major economic powers such as the US, EU and Japan have managed to use the WTO to frame rules of trade to advance their own interests.

(c) The developing countries often complain of non-transparent

procedure and being pushed around by big powers.

4. IAEA-International Atomic Energy Agency

(a) It was established in 1957 to implement US president Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" proposal.

(b) It seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to prevent its use for military purpose.

(c) IAEA teams regularly inspect nuclear facilities all over the world to ensure that civilian reactors are not being used for military purposes.

5. Amnesty International

(a) An NGO to campaign for the protection of human rights all over the world.

(b) It prepares and publishes reports on human rights to research and advocate human rights.

(c) Governments are not always happy with these reports since a major focus of Amnesty is the misconduct of government authorities.

6. Human Rights Watch

(a) Another international NGO involved in research and advocacy of human rights.

(b) The largest international human rights organisation in the US.

(c) It draws the global media's attention to human rights abuses.

(d) It helped in building international coalitions like the campaigns to ban landmines, to stop the use of child-soldier and to establish the international criminal court.

WORDS THAT MATTER

1. UN Charter: A constitution of the UN to deal with objectives of the UN.

2. Veto: It is a negative vote to be enjoyed by five permanent members of Security Council to stop a decision.

3. Secretary General: A representative head of the UN to prepare an annual record of the UN activities.

4. WHO: World Health Organisation to deal with matters related to health.

5. UNICEF: United Nation's Children Fund to deal with child welfare.

6. UNESCO: United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation to deal with promotion of education, science and culture.

7. Peace Keeping Operation: A mechanism for restoring peace and security by sending UN **controlled troops in the affected area.**

TIMELINE

1. August 1941: Signing of the Atlantic Charter by the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British PM Winston S. Churchill.

2. January 1942: 26 Allied nations fighting against the Axis Powers meet in Washington D.C., to support the Atlantic Charter and sign the 'Declaration by United Nations'.

3. December 1943: Tehran Conference Declaration of the three powers (US, Britain and Soviet Union)

4. February 1945: Yalta Conference of the 'Big Three' (Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin) decides to organise a United Nations conference on the proposed world organisation.

5. April-May 1945: The 2-month long United Nations Conference on International Organisation at San Francisco.

6. June 26, 1945: Signing of the UN Charter by 50 nations (Poland signed on October 15; so the UN has 51 original founding members)

7. October 24, 1945: The UN was founded (hence October 24 is celebrated as UN Day).

8. October 30, 1945: India joins the UN.

UN SECRETARIES-GENERAL

1. Trygve Lie (1946-1952) Norway: Lawyer and foreign minister, worked for ceasefire between India and Pakistan on Kashmir; criticised for his failure to quickly end the Korean war, Soviet Union opposed second term for him; resigned from the post.

2. Dag Hammarskjold (1953-1961) Sweden: Economist and lawyer, worked for resolving the Suez Canal dispute and the

decolonisation of Africa; awarded Nobel Peace Prize posthumously in 1961 for his efforts to settle the Congo Crisis, Soviet Union and France criticised his role in Africa.

3. U Thant (1961-1971) Burma (Myanmar): Teacher and diplomat worked for resolving the Cuban Missile crisis and ending the Congo Crisis; established the UN Peacekeeping force in Cyprus; criticised the US during the Vietnam war.

4. Kurt Waldheim (1972-1981) Austria: Diplomat and foreign minister; made efforts to resolve the problems of Namibia and Lebanon; oversaw the relief operation in Bangladesh, China blocked his bid for a third term.

5. Javier Perez de Cuellar (1982-1991) Peru: Lawyer and diplomat, worked for peace in Cyprus, Afghanistan and El Salvador; mediated between Britain and Argentina after the Falklands war; negotiated for the independence of Namibia.

6. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992-1996) Egypt: Diplomat, jurist, foreign minister; issued a report, 'An Agenda for Peace'; conducted a successful UN operation in Mozambique; blamed for the UN failures in Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda; due to serious disagreements, the US blocked a second term for him.

7. Kofi A. Annan (1997-2006) Ghana: UN official, created the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; declared the US-led invasion of Iraq as an illegal act; established the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council in 2005; awarded the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.