



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
*of Philadelphia*

HANDBOOK FOR  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
STUDENTS

The Student Diplomat Program  
*for Middle School Students*



# Table of Contents .....

<b>What is the UN?</b> .....	<b>2</b>
A Brief History.....	2
How does the UN Work?.....	4
The UN Charter .....	5
<b>The Six Main Organs</b> .....	<b>7</b>
ONE: The General Assembly (GA) .....	7
TWO: The Security Council (SC) .....	8
THREE: The Secretariat .....	10
FOUR: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) .....	12
FIVE: International Court of Justice (ICJ) .....	14
SIX: Trusteeship Council .....	17
<b>Global Issues on the UN Agenda</b> .....	<b>16</b>
What has the UN Accomplished? .....	17
The UN and Human Rights .....	18
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Glossary .....	18
Members States of the United Nations .....	20
Growth in UN Membership, 1945 - 2017.....	22
<b>Test Yourself!</b> .....	<b>24</b>

# What is the UN? .....

## A Brief History...

The United Nations dates back to the **Second World War**. At the time, the world was in turmoil. Millions of people were being killed, and millions more were forced from their homes. Cities lay in ruins. World leaders realized that to prevent another global war, **future wars could only be prevented if countries joined together in an international organization**. Hence, the UN was born.

This was not the first time such an organization had been created. The **League of Nations** was created in 1919, after the First World War, for a similar purpose. However, the League failed. Many important countries, including the United States, either did not join or soon quit. A team can't work without cooperation! The League had no power to enforce its decisions, such as using military force. Therefore it was helpless in preventing the outbreak of World War II.

**After WWII, the dreams of the League were reignited, this time with countries putting their money where their mouths were...**

The name "United Nations" was coined by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was first used in the "Declaration by United Nations" on January 1, 1942, when representatives of 26 countries pledged to fight against the Axis Powers. (The Axis Powers, headed by Germany, Italy and Japan, opposed the Allied Powers, led by the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, in World War II.) Towards the end of the war, representatives of 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to hammer out the final text that would lay the foundation of international cooperation. The final draft was the Charter of the United Nations.

The UN officially came into existence on **October 24, 1945**. Its Charter was ratified by 50 countries, including those most powerful at the time: China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. These five countries now make up the Security Council.

## Essential Facts

- The UN Headquarters is located in New York City, but the land and buildings are considered international territory.
- The UN has its own flag, its own post office, and its own postage stamps.
- Six official languages are used by its staff.
- The UN European Headquarters is located in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.
- The senior officer of the United Nations Secretariat is the Secretary-General.
- United Nations Day is celebrated on October 24 every year.

## The UN Today

- The United Nations is one of the more important international organizations in the world, with 193 member states, dozens of observer groups, as well as scientific, humanitarian, and peacekeeping missions around the world.
- The UN has recently passed reforms that would make its actions more transparent and effective.
- Plans to expand the Security Council to make it reflect the world of today and not of 1945 are still on the table.



The United Nations (UN) is a unique organization of independent countries voluntarily working for world peace and social justice.

The UN logo shows the world held in the "olive branches of peace."

## Official Languages of the UN:

- English
- Arabic (العربية)
- Chinese (中文)
- French (Français)
- Russian (Русский)
- Spanish (Español)

A delegate may speak in any of these languages and the speech will be interpreted simultaneously into the other official languages. Most UN documents are issued in all six official languages.

## The UN has six main organs:

- General Assembly (GA)
- Security Council (SC)
- Secretariat
- Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- International Court of Justice (ICJ)
- Trusteeship Council

These departments are all found at the UN headquarters in New York City, except for the ICJ, which is located in the Netherlands. The United Nations family, however, is much larger, encompassing 15 agencies and many other programs throughout the world. (See UN organization chart in the Appendix.)

United Nations Membership is open to all peace-loving and sovereign nations that accept the obligations of the Charter, and, in the judgement of the Organization, are willing and able to carry out these obligations.

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (at podium) addresses staff and guests during a 2016 visit to the newly renovated General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters in New York. The original UN structures were built between 1950 and 1952 and lacked modern safety standards. The original look and feel has been restored and state of the art electronics and more efficient heating and air conditioning systems have been installed, as well as better safety and security features.

Photo: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



## How Does the UN Work?

The UN is a place or forum where delegates come together to discuss issues that affect their countries both individually and collectively.

The UN can only take action on global issues when a majority of member states come to an agreement. It can only do as much as its member states allow.

The United Nations is careful to respect the **sovereignty** of each member state.

**Sovereignty means that the national government is the ultimate authority in decisions about policy and security for that country.**

In most cases, the UN cannot force member states to take action. Rather, countries only take action if they agree to do so. When debating issues, member states try to reach a consensus.

**Consensus means that there is a collective opinion or agreement reached among member states about a position or policy recommendation.**

It is very difficult to reach consensus in the UN because nations often disagree about the best way to solve problems. They will debate...and debate...and debate...and debate some more until an agreement (consensus) is reached.



Prior to starting its seventy-first general debate, the General Assembly held a brief special segment to mark the first anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Photo: UN Photo/Cia Pak

## The United Nations Charter .....

The **United Nations Charter** was signed on June 26, 1945, in San Francisco by representatives of 50 countries.

*We the Peoples,  
Of the United Nations  
United for a Better World...*

**A charter is a written contract that defines the rights and responsibilities of an organization or group.**

The UN Charter is recognized as an international treaty. The original copy of the Charter is kept at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. A replica is on display at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

The UN Charter sets forth the purposes of the United Nations as:

- Maintaining international peace and security;
- Development of friendly relations between states;
- Promoting international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.;
- Serving as a center for nations to achieve these goals.

The Charter opens with a Preamble and is made up of 19 chapters divided into 111 articles.

It expresses a strong hope for the equality of all people and the expansion of basic freedoms in countries around the world.

\*You can read the full Charter online at: <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stands next to the original copy of the Charter of the United Nations. The original founding document was brought from Washington D.C. by Jana Dambrogio, United States National Archives Senior Conservator, during the second-term swearing-in ceremony of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten



## Preamble to the UN Charter

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

*\*Does this **Preamble** remind you of any other important document you've learned about in American history that promises human rights to all its citizens?*



In 2014, a special event called, “Girls Speak Out: Showcasing Girl Activists from around the World”, was held at UN headquarters to mark the International Day of the Girl Child (11 October). The observance was organized by Working Group on Girls, in partnership with the Governments of Canada, Peru and Turkey.

Photo: UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

# The Six Main Organs .....

## The General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the central organ of the UN. This is where all 193 Member States can gather to discuss international issues and concerns. Each nation has one vote and is represented by a delegation of diplomats headed by an **ambassador**. The General Assembly reaches decisions through a majority vote.

### What does the GA do?

Because the GA is so large, it can be difficult to get things accomplished. Think of how difficult it is to decide what to do on a Friday evening with your friends! Now imagine 193 delegates trying to agree on a single issue in the context of competing national interests.

To make the assembly more productive and focused, the GA is divided into six main committees:

- **The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)**
- **The Economic and Financial Committee**
- **The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)**
- **The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)**
- **The Administrative and Budgetary Committee**
- **The Legal Committee**

Each committee presents its work in the form of written resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary (all 193 member states). In the Plenary, all member states discuss, debate and amend resolutions before voting on them in the General Assembly.

**A resolution is a statement used to identify a position or recommend action on a particular issue.**

The General Assembly's regular session begins each year in September and continues throughout the year. Each year, the Assembly elects a president who presides over (runs) the Assembly meetings. These meetings are similar to sessions of the United States Congress; however, the UN is not considered a world government. It only has authority to make policy suggestions and cannot force countries to follow those suggestions. In other words, what the General Assembly decides upon is **not binding**.

In 2012, Anthony Lake (right), Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), addressed the General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) at its meeting on the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

Photo: UN Photo/Ryan Brown



The founders of the UN designed the **Security Council (SC)** to be the main guardian of world peace. While the General Assembly can discuss any world concern, the SC only deals with questions of peace and security. **The SC is the only UN organ that has the authority to demand action on the part of Member States; all other UN resolutions are non-binding.**

## What does the SC do?

The UN Charter gives the SC the following responsibilities:

- To **maintain international peace and security** in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- To **investigate any dispute or situation** that might lead to international conflict and to identify the aggressor nation;
- To **recommend ways to settle disputes** through treaties, economic sanctions, and other form of non-military diplomacy;
- To **take military action** against an aggressor (through UN Peacekeeping Operations);
- To **recommend the admission of new members**;
- To **exercise the trusteeship functions** of the United Nations in “strategic areas”;
- To **recommend** to the General Assembly the **appointment of the Secretary-General** and, together with the Assembly, to **elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.**

There are **15 countries**, total, represented on the Security Council.

Five countries are permanent members, and are often called the “**Big Five**”: **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.** These five permanent members have special powers that the other ten do not have.

The other ten countries on the Security Council are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. They are chosen on the basis of geography so that different areas of the world are always represented. As of 2017, the following countries were members of the Security Council (with end-of-term dates listed):

Bolivia (2018)

Japan (2017)

Ukraine (2017)

Egypt (2017)

Kazakhstan (2018)

Uruguay (2017)

Ethiopia (2018)

Senegal (2017)

Italy (2018)

Sweden (2018)



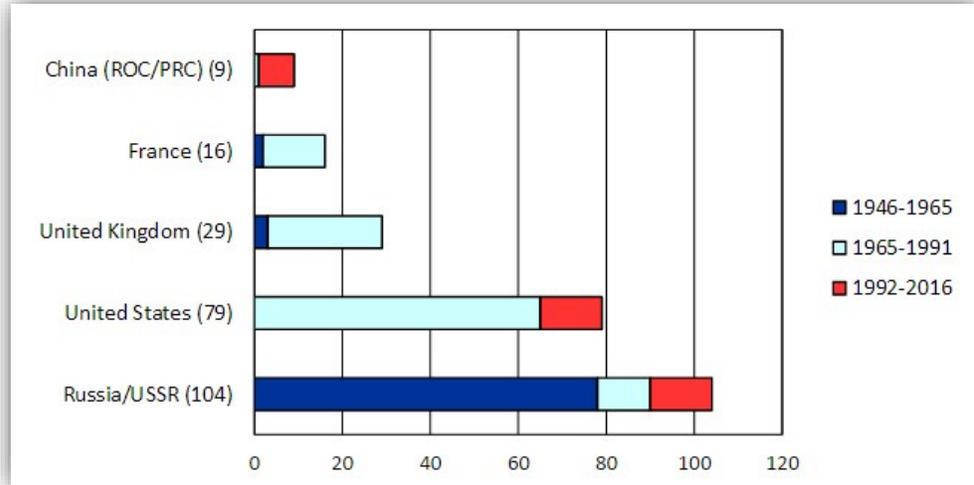
In 2017, Asha Gelle Dirie, Chairperson of the Committee of Goodwill Ambassadors, Federal Republic of Somalia, addressed the Security Council meeting on the situation in her country.

Photo: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

## Voting Procedures

Voting in the Security Council is not like voting in the General Assembly. To pass, a resolution must get at least nine “yes” votes. But, if any one of the five permanent members votes “no,” the resolution is **defeated** – it does not pass. This is called a **veto**. Because of the veto threat, resolutions are passed by consensus.

Number of times a veto has been cast between 1946-2016:



Source: Global Policy Forum (2016)

### Why do only five countries have veto power?

These five major world powers played key roles in the establishment of the UN. They were also the victors of the Second World War. The best way to ensure peace was to get these important countries to work together through common agreement, especially on questions of war and peace. Thus, it was agreed that if any one of the “Big Five” did not agree to a recommendation, the Security Council would not act upon it. This special power given to the permanent members is called “veto power.”

**Is it fair?** Lots of countries say it is not fair, but there are two big reasons why it stays like this:

1. **Money:** The five permanent members pay for nearly half the cost of running the UN – even though there are 193 member states.
2. **Rules:** If you had a vote on getting rid of the veto, the countries with veto power could veto it!

A 2014 view of the Security Council as Vitaly I. Churkin (center, hand raised), Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the UN, vetoes a draft resolution which declared the planned referendum on independence for Ukraine's Crimea region illegal and urged countries not to recognize the results.

Photo: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



The Secretariat, the UN bureaucracy and international staff working in duty stations around the world carry out the diverse day-to-day operations of the United Nations. The people that work for the Secretariat's offices represent 170 different countries in offices around the world. It is represented by the Secretary General. The Secretariat answers to the United Nations alone for its activities. Its members take an oath not to seek or receive instructions from any government or outside authority.

## What does the Secretariat do?

The Secretariat is responsible for carrying out the decisions laid down by the other principle organs of the United Nations. It does this by:

- Strengthening the three pillars of the UN – security, development and human rights;
- Breathing new life and injecting renewed confidence into the Secretariat;
- Seeking to set the highest standards of ethics, professionalism, and accountability;
- Working to usher in a new day in relations between the Secretariat and member states.

The specific duties of the Secretariat are as varied as the problems dealt with by the UN. These range from organized peacekeeping operations to mediating international disputes, from surveying economic and social trends to preparing studies on **human rights** and **sustainable development**. Secretariat members include interpreters, translators, librarians, lawyers, engineers and editors.

## Who is the Secretary-General?

The Secretary-General is the chief officer of the entire United Nations. He is the ultimate “boss”; he is in charge of thousands of people who work at the UN in New York and throughout the world. The Secretary-General follows a policy of **preventive diplomacy**. This means he takes steps to prevent international disputes from developing, growing or spreading to other countries.

**How can you be the next Secretary General?** The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term. Although there is no written rule, the role of Secretary-General is rotated among the various regions of the world.



Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon from South Korea (right) meets with António Guterres from Portugal, the current Secretary-General as of 2017. In 2016, the General Assembly appointed Mr. Guterres by acclamation, to serve as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Photo: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

## The Secretary-General wants YOUR help!

The UN holds extra importance for young people. Its main purpose is to ensure a peaceful future for the world — the world that kids will one day inherit and lead.

Here's part of a recent article about the United Nations **Youth Forum**. The Youth Forum, held annually by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2012, offers young people an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about what they can do to achieve sustainable development. This 2016 article includes an inspiring quote from current Secretary-General António Guterres:

**“ We must build on the work that has been done with the support of Member States, the Youth Envoy and civil society. But this cannot be an initiative by old people discussing the younger generation. The United Nations must empower young people, increase their participation in society and their access to education, training and jobs. ”**

UN Secretary-General-designate António Guterres  
Swearing-in Ceremony, UN General Assembly  
New York, 12 December 2016



Drawing attention towards challenges such as climate change, unemployment and inequality, confronting young people around the world, including in places where peace prevails, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today called for the youth to speak up and share their stories.

“Tell us how the United Nations can see the world from your perspective – and answer your concerns,” said Mr. Guterres in a video message to representatives gathered at UN Headquarters in New York for the sixth annual Youth Forum.

According to estimates, about 74 million young people around the world cannot find a job, many youth are driven from their homes due to conflicts, and, in places where there is peace, they suffer violence and discrimination.

The UN chief, however, emphasized that young people are also on the vanguard of progress – as entrepreneurs, activists and community leaders.

“You inspire change [...] you have the talent, energy and ideals to prevent conflicts, defend human rights, secure peace and realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” he added, noting that their messages will help “create a safer and more stable world for all.”

The **Economic and Social Council**, called **ECOSOC** for short, is the central place at the United Nations for discussing **economic and social problems**. Its goal is to promote higher standards of living, full employment, economic and social progress, respect for human rights and freedoms, and international cooperation.

*Economics is the study of how a society uses its scarce resources.*

Economic problems include those related to the development of:

- Trade
- Transportation
- Technology and Industry
- Farming
- Communications

Social problems include those concerning:

- Children
- Discrimination
- Crime
- Refugees
- Education
- Healthcare

ECOSOC addresses these problems by coordinating the work of the **14 UN specialized agencies**, **ten functional commissions** (like committees) and **five regional commissions**.

- One example of a **specialized agency** is WHO, the **World Health Organization**. WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for healthcare within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters.
- The **Commission on Human Rights** is an example of a **functional commission**. The CHR is mandated to examine, monitor and publicly report either on human rights situations in specific countries or territories or on major phenomena or human rights violations worldwide.
- An example of a **regional commission** is the **Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**. ECA's mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration and promote international cooperation for Africa's development.



In 2016, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon read to a group of schoolchildren at the Zaatari Refugee Camp, located near Mafraq, Jordan. The settlement had grown to house nearly 80,000 Syrian refugees since it opened in 2012. UNICEF has since established nine school complexes at the settlement to ensure seats for the 28,000 school age children living at the camp.

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

# 13 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals .....

In 2000, the work of the ECOSOC laid the foundation for eight Millennium Development Goals targeted at ending poverty and improving the quality of life for all people around the world. The goals had a target date of 2015, but the issues at hand proved much larger and complicated than the UN predicted, and so a new set of goals were created to continue the mission. Created at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were adopted by world leaders in an effort to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change around the world.

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are built upon the previous Millennium Development Goals but “the new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people.”

The Sustainable Development Goals, which have a target date of 2030, consist of the following seventeen objectives:



These goals provide a framework by which all nations of the world can pool together their resources with the aim of providing to every man, woman and child a future that is marked by equal dignity and opportunity. There is still much work to be done if these goals are to be achieved by 2030. You can visit the United Nations website to learn more about the goals and see how it evaluates its progress to date on these goals:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html#>

The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** is the judicial organ of the United Nations.

Also known as the World Court, the ICJ is unique because it only hears cases between nations - not individuals, companies or other groups like in a regular court. Nations cannot be forced to take their problems to the ICJ. However, once a nation agrees to allow the ICJ to discuss its case, it is obliged to adhere to the Court's decision, whether it wins or loses. Since 1947 and up until 2017, the court has heard 166 cases.

## How does the ICJ work?

The Court has two functions:

1. to settle, according to international law, the legal disputes submitted to it by nations;
2. to give advisory opinions on legal questions asked by international agencies, specifically the UN General Assembly.

**International law is the body of rules that nations follow when dealing with one another.**

There are 15 judges from different nations on the ICJ. Only one judge of each nationality is permitted. These judges are experts in international law, and they make decisions about what nations should do when they have a dispute.

## Where is the ICJ ?

You won't find the ICJ when you visit the UN in New York. That's because it is located in a city in the Netherlands called **The Hague**. The ICJ is the only one of the six main organs of the UN located outside of New York City.

The building that the ICJ is located in is called the **Peace Palace**. Every country in the world contributed something to it (building material, furniture, paintings and more), so it is truly an international building.



A 2012 view of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Bench during the reading of its Judgment in the case concerning Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (Belgium v. Senegal). The Court ruled that, in compliance with its obligations under the Convention Against Torture, Senegal must prosecute or extradite former Chadian President Hissène Habré.

This session took place, exceptionally, in the Japanese Room of the Peace Palace. The ICJ's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States (its Judgments are final and binding) and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and agencies.

Photo: UN Photo//ICJ-CIJ/Frank van Beek

## Special Tribunals

Because the ICJ only addresses disputes between two nations, it cannot bring charges against a state or individual(s) for their actions. Therefore, the UN has set up special tribunals who have the authority to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute conflicts between peoples of the same nation or region that result in horrific acts. These special tribunals have the power to try individuals—both civilians and those serving in the government—who committed such atrocities as genocide and ethnic cleansing.

To date, three tribunals have been established by the Security Council:

### 1. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

- This tribunal, located in The Hague, the Netherlands, tries government officials, generals and guerillas suspected of committing war crimes during the country's civil war in the 1990s.
- The tribunal covers Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo.
- One well-known criminal was Slobodan Milosevic.

### 2. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

- Located in Tanzania, this tribunal tries government officials involved in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

### 3. Special Tribunal for Lebanon

- This tribunal, located in the Netherlands, tries suspect of the 2005 terrorist bombing that killed Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others.

There are also courts in East Timor, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Cambodia supported by the international community.

## Trusteeship Council

When the UN was first established, there were some parts of the world that did not have independent governments. Some were operating under a mandate, a form of colonial rule set up after World War I by the League of Nations for Great Britain and France. Others were liberated from occupying countries after World War II. Many of these countries had little or no experience at governing themselves.

Once the UN was set up, these areas were called "Trust Territories" and were placed under its special protection. When the Trusteeship Council was formed, there were 11 Trust Territories, mostly in Africa and the Pacific Ocean.

Today, all of these Territories have attained self-government or independence, either as separate states or by joining neighboring independent countries.

The Trusteeship Council formally ceased operations in 1994, when the last territory, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, now Palau, became independent. The Council will only meet if the need arises.

### Decolonization and the UN

In 1945, when the UN was established, half the world's people lived in colonies that were being controlled by outside countries. Colonies were divided among a handful of major powers, including Great Britain, France and Portugal.

Through a process called decolonization, the UN has helped most of these countries become independent states. Today, more than 80 former colonies are now members themselves of the United Nations.

*Can you name some countries that were former colonies? What country used to rule them? Can you name some territories that are still dependent on other countries?*

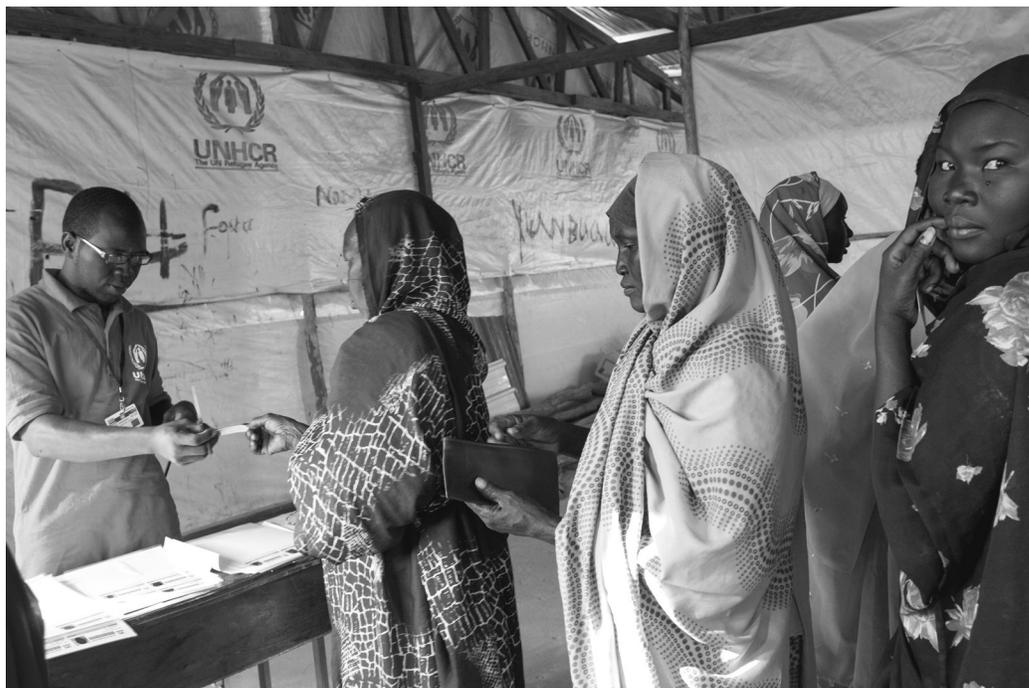
As you now know, the UN tackles five main topics worldwide:

1. **peace and security**
2. **economic and social development**
3. **human rights**
4. **humanitarian affairs**
5. **international law**

Some of the most important issues currently on the UN agenda are:

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AIDS                      | Africa                        |
| Aging                     | Atomic Energy                 |
| Children                  | Climate Change                |
| Decolonization            | Democracy                     |
| Food                      | Health                        |
| Human Rights              | International Law and Justice |
| Oceans and Law of the Sea | Peace and Security            |
| Population                | Refugees                      |
| Water                     | Women                         |

*\*Go to <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/global-issues-overview/> to see a full list of issues. Choose one that interests you and click on its link. Why is the UN involved? In what ways is it trying to help? What countries are especially involved in the issue? How can you help too?*



A UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) registration officer issues identification cards to refugees at the refugee camp in Nyeel, South Sudan in 2013.

Photo: UN Photo/Martine Perret

With the help of governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private businesses, the United Nations has played a key role in many global achievements during the last 70+ years:

- **UN Peacekeeping** is a vital instrument for peace. As of 2017 a little over 100,000 military personnel, provided by 125 countries, are engaged in 16 operations throughout the world.
- **UN environmental conventions** have helped reduce acid rain in Europe and North America, cut marine pollution worldwide and phased out production of gases destroying Earth's ozone layer.
- The UN and its agencies, such as the UN Development Program, along with other organizations like the **World Bank**, help poor countries develop their economies, providing more than \$30 billion in assistance each year.
- More **international law** has been developed through the UN in the past five decades than in all previous history.
- Every year, the lives of up to 3 million **children are saved by immunization**. UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank Group, private foundations, the pharmaceutical industry and government have joined hands in a new initiative—the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization—that aims to reduce child death rates to zero.
- The **World Food Program** each year provides about one-third of the world's food aid.
- Air traffic is safer, thanks to the rules and regulations agreed on through the International Civil Aviation Organization.
- UN appeals raise more than \$1 billion per year for **emergency assistance** to victims of war and natural disaster.
- Smallpox was eradicated from the world due to a global campaign coordinated by **WHO**. Another WHO campaign has eliminated polio from the Americas and aims at eradicating it globally.

Malaysian women peacekeepers of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) at a medal ceremony in Kawkaba, south Lebanon.

UN Photo/Pasqual Gorriz



## The UN and Human Rights .....

Throughout its history, the UN has been concerned about the welfare of people around the world. **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted unanimously in 1948 and translated into over 300 languages, is the best known and the most cited human rights document in the world.

It states that all people are born free and equal and should not be mistreated due to their political views, religion, gender, nationality or race. All people also have the right to adequate health and living standards and the right to an education.

- More than 80 international human rights principles have been created since 1948.
- The office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN official with principal responsibility for human rights activities, receives reports of over 200,000 violations per year.
- The **International Criminal Court** was established in 2002. By 2017, over 120 member states had joined in signing the treaty establishing the Court.

*It is important to remember that a **declaration is not the same as a law**. This means that the UN **cannot force** countries to protect these rights.*

Instead, when a country has ratified the Declaration, the UN has the right to monitor and report on human rights in that country. UN diplomats can put moral pressure on a country's representatives to respect the rights stated in the Declaration.

*\*Find a real-life example of a place where the UN has helped to ensure human rights are respected by visiting: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/WorkInField.aspx>*



Argentinean peacekeepers with the United Nations Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) administer medical aid to residents of Les Cayes affected by Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

UN Photo/Logan Abassi

# Appendix .....

## Glossary

**Ambassador** - a diplomatic official or representative of a country

**Charter** - a written contract defining the rights and responsibilities of an organization or group

**Consensus** - when a general agreement is reached among member states about a policy recommendation

**Convention** - an agreement between countries about basic principles or international conduct

**Diplomat** - a person who represents their country (also called a delegate) and negotiates with other delegates about important international issues

**Human Rights** - the basic rights and freedoms to which every human being is entitled

**International Law** - the body of rules that nations follow in dealing with one another

**Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** - organizations that are not associated with the government of a specific country or international political organization. Their aims can be broad (e.g., Amnesty International, Greenpeace), or quite specific (Doctors Without Borders) in their activities and goals. They may influence policy, organize communities around special issues or provide medical or technical assistance. The UN works with NGOs on many international issues

**Peacekeeping** - when people (both civilian and military) come between two hostile parties to help control and resolve a conflict

**Preventive Diplomacy** - steps taken by the UN to prevent international disputes from developing, growing or spreading to other countries

**Ratify** - the action taken when a country formally approves a treaty or convention

**Resolution** - a statement used to identify a position or recommend an action on a particular issue. UN resolutions have headings, perambulatory clauses and operative clauses.

**Sovereignty** - the idea that national government is the ultimate authority in policy decisions and national security

**Sustainable Development** - development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Veto** - the power of a nation to vote "no" (reserved for the "Big Five" of the Security Council), making a resolution fail automatically

The following is a list of the 193 member states, in alphabetical order, of the United Nations with dates on which they joined the organization.

## Member—(Date of Admission)

Afghanistan-(19 Nov 1946)	Democratic People's Republic of Korea- (17 Sep.1991)
Albania-(14 Dec. 1955)	Democratic Republic of the Congo-(20 Sep. 1960)
Algeria-(8 Oct. 1962)	Denmark-(24 Oct. 1945)
Andorra-(21 Jul. 1993)	Djibouti-(20 Sep. 1977)
Angola-(1 Dec.1976)	Dominica-(18 Dec. 1978)
Antigua and Barbuda-(11 Nov. 1981)	Dominican Republic-(24 Oct. 1945)
Argentina-(24 Oct. 1945)	
Armenia-(2 Mar. 1992)	Ecuador- (21 Dec. 1945)
Australia-(1 Nov. 1945)	Egypt-(24 Oct. 1945)
Austria-(14 Dec. 1955)	El Salvador-(24 Oct. 1945)
Azerbaijan-(2 Mar 1992)	Equatorial Guinea- (12 Nov. 1968)
	Eritrea-(28 May 1993)
Bahamas-(18 Sep. 1973)	Estonia-(17 Sep. 1991)
Bahrain-(21 Sep. 1971)	Ethiopia-(13 Nov.1945)
Bangladesh-(17 Sep. 1974)	
Barbados-(9 Dec. 1966)	Fiji-(13 Oct. 1970)
Belarus-(24 Oct. 1945)	Finland-(14 Dec. 1955)
Belgium-(27 Dec. 1945)	France-(24 Oct. 1945)
Belize-(25 Sep 1981)	
Benin-(20 Sep. 1960)	Gabon-(20 Sep. 1960)
Bhutan-(21 Sep. 1971)	Gambia- (21 Sep. 1965)
Bolivia-(14 Nov. 1945)	Georgia- (31 Jul. 1992)
Bosnia and Herzegovina-(22 May 1992)	Germany-(18 Sep. 1973)
Botswana-(17 Oct. 1966)	Ghana-(8 Mar. 1957)
Brazil-(24 Oct. 1945)	Greece-(25 Oct. 1945)
Brunei Darussalam-(21 Sep. 1984)	Grenada-(17 Sep. 1974)
Bulgaria-(14 Dec. 1955)	Guatemala-(21 Nov. 1945)
Burkina Faso-(20 Sep. 1960)	Guinea-(12 Dec. 1958)
Burundi-(18 Sep. 1962)	Guinea-Bissau-(17 Sep. 1974)
	Guyana- (20 Sep. 1966)
Cambodia-(14 Dec. 1955)	
Cameroon-(20 Sep. 1960)	Haiti- (24 Oct. 1915)
Canada-(9 Nov. 1945)	Honduras-(17 Dec. 1945)
Cape Verde-(16 Sep. 1975)	Hungary-(14 Dec. 1955)
Central African Republic- (20 Sep. 1960)	
Chad-(20 Sep. 1960)	Iceland-(19 Nov. 1946)
Chile-(24 Oct. 1945)	India-(30 Oct. 1945)
China-(24 Oct. 1945)	Indonesia-(28 Sep. 1950)
Colombia-(5 Nov. 1945)	Iran (Islamic Republic of)-(24 Oct. 1945)
Comoros-(12 Nov. 1975)	Iraq-(21 Dec. 1945)
Congo-(20 Sep. 1960)	Ireland-(14 Dec. 1955)
Costa Rica-(2 Nov. 1945)	Israel-(11 May 1949)
Cote d'Ivoire-(20 Sep 1960)	Italy-(14 Dec. 1955)
Croatia-(22 May 1992)	
Cuba-(24 Oct. 1945)	Jamaica-(18 Sep. 1962)
Cyprus-(20 Sep. 1960)	Japan-(18 Dec. 1956)
Czech Republic-(19 Jan. 1993)	Jordan-(14 Dec. 1955)

- Kazakhstan-(2 Mar. 1992)  
 Kenya-(16 Dec. 1963)  
 Kiribati-(14 Sept. 1999)  
 Kuwait-(14 May 1963)  
 Kyrgyzstan-(2 Mar. 1992)  
 Kyrgyzstan-(2 Mar. 1992)
- Lao People's Democratic Republic- (14 Dec. 1955)  
 Latvia-(17 Sep. 1991)  
 Lebanon-(24 Oct. 19-15)  
 Lesotho-(17 Oct. 1966)  
 Liberia- (2 Nov. 1945)  
 Libyan Arab Jamahiriya-(14 Dec. 1955)  
 Liechtenstein-(18 Sep. 1990)  
 Lithuania- (17 Sep. 1991) Luxembourg- (24 Oct. 1945)
- Madagascar-(20 Sep. 1960) Malawi- (1 Dec. 1964)  
 Malaysia- (17 Sep. 1957) Maldives-(21 Sep. 1965)  
 Mali - (28 Sep. 1960)  
 Malta-(1 Dec. 1964)  
 Marshall Islands- (17 Sep. 1991) Mauritania-(27 Oct. 1961)  
 Mauritius-(24 Apr. 1968)  
 Mexico-(7 Nov. 1945)  
 Micronesia-(17 Sep. 1991)  
 Monaco-(28 May 1993)  
 Mongolia-(27 Oct. 1961)  
 Montenegro-(28 June 2006)  
 Morocco-(12 Nov. 1956)  
 Mozambique-(16 Sep. 1975) Myanmar-(19Apr. 1948)
- Namibia- (23 Apr. 1990)  
 Nauru-(14 Sept. 1999)  
 Nepal-(14 Dec. 1955)  
 Netherlands- (10 Dec.1945) New Zealand-(24 Oct. 1945)  
 Nicaragua-(24 Oct. 1945) Niger-(20 Sep. 1960)  
 Nigeria-(7 Oct.1960)  
 Norway-(27 Nov. 1945)  
 Oman-(7 Oct.1971)  
 Pakistan-(30 Sep. 1947)  
 Palau- (15 Dec. 1994)  
 Panama-(13 Nov. 1945)  
 Papua New Guinea-(10 Oct. 1975)  
 Paraguay- (24 Oct. 1945)  
 Peru-(31 Oct. 1945)  
 Philippines- (24 Oct. 19-15)  
 Poland (24 Oct. 1945)  
 Portugal- (14 Dec. 1955)
- Qatar- (21 Sep. 1971)
- Republic of Korea-(17 Sep. 1991)  
 Republic of Moldova-(2 Mar. 1992)  
 Romania-(14 Dec. 1955)  
 Russian Federation-(24 Oct. 1945)  
 Rwanda-(18 Sep. 1962)
- Saint Kitts and Nevis-(23 Sep.1983)  
 Saint Lucia-(18 Sep. 1979)  
 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines-(16 Sep. 1980)  
 Samoa-(15 Dec. 1976)  
 San Marino-(2 Mar. 1992)  
 Sao Tome and Principe-(16 Sep. 1975)  
 Saudi Arabia-(24 Oct. 1945)  
 Senegal-(28 Sep. 1960)  
 Serbia- (1 Nov.2000)  
 Seychelles- (21 Sep.1976)  
 Sierra Leone-(27 Sep. 1961)  
 Singapore-(21 Sep.1965)  
 Slovakia-(19 Jan. 1993)  
 Slovenia-(22 May 1992)  
 Solomon Islands-(19 Sep. 1978)  
 Somalia-(20 Sep. 1960)  
 South Africa-(7 Nov. 1945)  
 South Sudan-(14 July 2011)  
 Spain-(14 Dec. 1955)  
 Sri Lanka-(14 Dec. 1955)  
 Sudan-(12 Nov. 1956)  
 Suriname-(4 Dec. 1975)  
 Swaziland-(24 Sep. 1968)  
 Sweden-(19 Oct. 1946)  
 Switzerland-(10 Sep. 2002)  
 Syrian Arab Republic-(24 Oct. 1945)
- Tajikistan- (2 Mar. 1992)  
 Thailand-(16 Dec. 1946)  
 The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-(8 Apr 1993)  
 Timor-Leste-(27 Sep.2002)  
 Togo-(20 Sep. 1960)  
 Tonga-(14 Sep. 1999)  
 Trinidad and Tobago- (18 Sep. 1962)  
 Tunisia-(12 Nov. 1956)  
 Turkey-(24 Oct. 1945)  
 Turkmenistan-(2 Mar.1992)  
 Tuvalu-(5 Sept. 2000)
- Uganda- (25 Oct. 1962)  
 Ukraine-(24 Oct.1945)  
 United Arab Emirates- (9 Dec. 1971)  
 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland-(24 Oct 1945)  
 United Republic of Tanzania-(14 Dec. 1961)  
 United States of America-(24 Oct.1945)  
 Uruguay-(18 Dec. 1945)  
 Uzbekistan-(2 Mar. 1992)
- Vanuatu-(15 Sep. 1981)  
 Venezuela-(15 Nov. 1945)  
 Viet Nam-(20 Sep. 1977)Yemen-(30 Sep. 1947)
- Zambia-(1 Dec. 1964)  
 Zimbabwe-(25 Aug. 1980)

Year	Number	Member States
1945	Original 51	Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, USSR (now Russian Federation), Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia
1946	55	Afghanistan, Iceland, Sweden, Thailand
1947	57	Pakistan, Yemen
1948	58	Myanmar (formerly Burma)
1949	59	Israel
1950	60	Indonesia
1955	76	Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sri Lanka
1956	80	Japan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia
1957	82	Ghana, Malaysia
1958	83	Guinea
1960	99	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Togo
1961	104	Mauritania, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania
1962	110	Algeria, Burundi, Jamaica, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda
1963	112	Kenya, Kuwait
1964	115	Malawi, Malta, Zambia
1965	117	Gambia, Maldives, Singapore
1966	122	Barbados, Botswana, Guyana, Lesotho
1967	123	Democratic Yemen
1968	126	Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Swaziland
1970	127	Fiji
1971	132	Bahrain, Bhutan, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates
1973	135	Bahamas, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic
1974	138	Bangladesh, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau

Year	Number	Member States
1975	144	Cape Verde, Comoros, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Suriname
1976	147	Angola, Samoa, Seychelles
1977	149	Djibouti, Viet Nam
1978	151	Dominica, Solomon Islands
1979	152	Saint Lucia
1980	154	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Zimbabwe
1981	157	Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Vanuatu
1983	158	Saint Kitts and Nevis
1984	159	Brunei Darussalam
1990	159	Liechtenstein, Namibia
1991	166	Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Estonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Republic of Korea
1992	179	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
1993	184	Andorra, Czech Republic, Eritrea, Monaco, Slovak Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
1994	185	Palau
1999	188	Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga
2000	189	Tuvalu, Serbia (formerly Yugoslav1a)
2002	191	Switzerland, Timor-Leste
2006	192	Montenegro
2011	193	South Sudan

\*There are also currently 17 Permanent Observer missions to the United Nations.

Although they are not countries, these groups are important enough in international diplomacy to have a presence at the UN. However, Permanent Observer missions do not have any voting power. These include:

**Non member state:** The Holy See (the Vatican)

**Entity:** Palestine

**Intergovernmental Organizations:** African Union, Commonwealth, European Community, INTERPOL, League of Arab states, Organization of the Islamic Conference, and many more.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Test Yourself!



Now that you have learned all about the United Nations, let's review some of the most important points about the United Nations that a good diplomat should know. Fill in the blank spaces. When completed, review the answers with your teacher. Answers are found on page 25.

### Question #1: What is the UN?

- a. The United Nations is made up of \_\_\_\_\_ countries from around the world. It is better known by its acronym, the UN.
- b. The UN was established in 1945, after the Second World War. Its primary purpose was to \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. The document that sets forth all the rights and responsibilities of the United Nations is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. The UN Charter is considered an \_\_\_\_\_ treaty and the original copy of the Charter is housed at the \_\_\_\_\_ in Washington, D.C.
- e. Describe the United Nations logo. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Question #2: Where is the UN based?

- a. The United Nations' headquarters is located in \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. But the land and buildings do not belong to the USA. The UN buildings are considered \_\_\_\_\_; this means they belong to every country that is a part of the UN.

### Question #3: What does the UN do?

The UN works for world peace and development in many different ways.

- a. It organizes \_\_\_\_\_ forces for trouble-spots around the world, such as in Syria or in Africa.
- b. The \_\_\_\_\_ addresses economic and social issues.
- c. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a UN agency that specializes in international health issues.

### Question #4: A Global Game Plan to Reduce Poverty, Protect the Planet, and Ensure Prosperity

- a. In 2015, the UN established the \_\_\_\_\_ Goals, whose primary purpose is to reduce poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity.
- b. Name three of the \_\_\_\_\_ goals identified in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. In what year does the UN hope to meet the Sustainable Development Goals? \_\_\_\_\_

## Question #5: Who is in charge?

- a. The head of the UN is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. The current Secretary General is \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_. He is the \_\_\_\_\_th UN Secretary General.

## Question #6: What is a resolution?

- a. Representatives of each member country meet in the \_\_\_\_\_; this is the closest thing to a world parliament.
- b. Each country has \_\_\_\_\_ vote. Resolutions pass when a majority of the member states vote in favor.
- c. Major decisions about important issues, like who can join the UN, need the support of two-\_\_\_\_\_ of the Assembly. Less important decisions need the support of over one-half of the Assembly.
- d. The Assembly's decisions are not \_\_\_\_\_. Governments follow resolutions because they represent the world's opinion on major international issues.

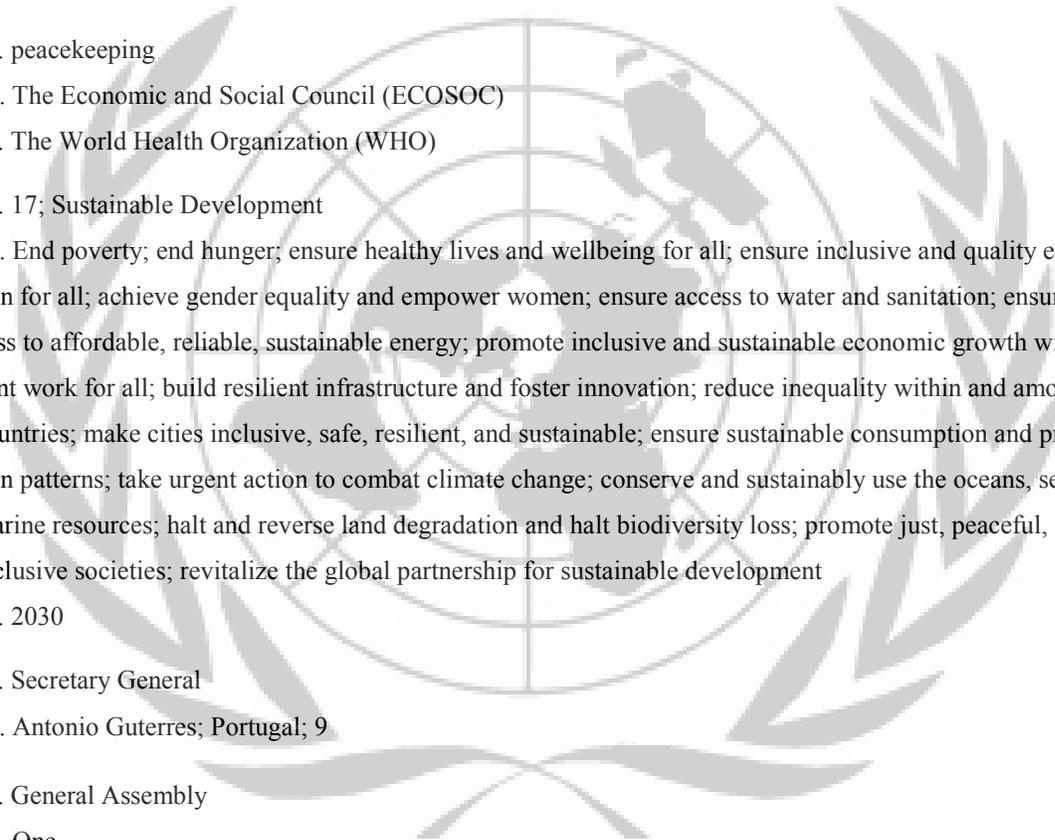
## Question #7: What is the Security Council?

- a. The \_\_\_\_\_ members of the UN Security Council try to keep the world a peaceful and secure place. They vote on the best ways to prevent countries from fighting. There are two groups of members.
- b. Five permanent members: These countries are always on the council because they had a vital role in establishing the United Nations in 1945. Name them:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Ten temporary members: These members are voted for every \_\_\_\_\_ years by the rest of the UN.
- d. The rules for voting:
1. One member, \_\_\_\_\_ vote.
  2. Each of the five permanent members can stop the UN from making decisions with which they disagree. This is called the power of \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Nine votes in favor are needed to make a decision.
  4. Five of the nine votes must come from permanent members.

## Question #8: What is UNICEF?

- a. UNICEF stands for the United Nations \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. It looks after the needs of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in developing countries around the world. It works with local communities and governments in more than 190 countries to help every child reach their full potential. UNICEF was created in December 1946 by the United Nations.

- 1a. 193
- 1b. Member States (or Member Countries)
- 1c. Maintain peace and security in the world
- 1d. Charter
- 1e. International; National Archives
- 1f. The United Nations logo shows a map of the world (with no one country or region excluded) encircled by the “olive branches of peace.”
  
- 2a. New York City
- 2b. International
  
- 3a. peacekeeping
- 3b. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- 3c. The World Health Organization (WHO)
  
- 4a. 17; Sustainable Development
- 4b. End poverty; end hunger; ensure healthy lives and wellbeing for all; ensure inclusive and quality education for all; achieve gender equality and empower women; ensure access to water and sanitation; ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy; promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth with decent work for all; build resilient infrastructure and foster innovation; reduce inequality within and among countries; make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable; ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; take urgent action to combat climate change; conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources; halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies; revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
- 4c. 2030
  
- 5a. Secretary General
- 5b. Antonio Guterres; Portugal; 9
  
- 6a. General Assembly
- 6b. One
- 6c. Thirds
- 6d. binding
  
- 7a. 15
- 7b. People’s Republic of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States
- 7c. two
- 7d. 1) one; 2) veto
  
- 8a. Children’s Fund
- 8b. children and mothers





One South Broad Street, 2 Mezzanine • Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: 215-561-4700 • Fax: 215-561-5660 • [www.wacphila.org](http://www.wacphila.org)

---