United Nations: Objectives, Achievements & Failures

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States.

Its mission and work guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter and implemented by its various organs and specialised agencies.

Its activities include maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.

History of UN Foundation

- In 1899, the International Peace Conference was held in The Hague to elaborate instruments for settling crises peacefully, preventing wars and codifying rules of warfare.
  - It adopted the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes and established the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which began work in 1902. This court was the forerunner of UN International Court of Justice.
- The forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations, an organization conceived in circumstances of the First World War, and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security."
  - The International Labour Organization (ILO) was also created in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League.
- The name "United Nations", coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A document called The Declaration by United Nations was signed in 1942 by 26 nations, pledging their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers (Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis) and bound them against making a separate peace.
  - Conference held in San Francisco (USA), was attended by representatives of 50 countries and signed the United Nations Charter.
- The UN Charter of 1945 is the foundational treaty of the United Nations, as an inter-governmental organization.

Components

The main organs of the UN are
1. the General Assembly,
2. the Security Council,
3. the Economic and Social Council,
4. the Trusteeship Council,
5. the International Court of Justice,
6. and the UN Secretariat.

All the 6 were established in 1945 when the UN was founded.

Objectives & Principles

The United Nations Charter

While drafting the Charter of the United Nations, the experiences and practices of the League of Nations were mostly relied upon. The UN Charter is a document that sets forth the principles to be followed by the organization and its members.

Purposes and Principle

Chapter I of the Charter lays down the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 1 of the UN Charter

Article 1 of the 1 UN Charter talks about the purposes of the United Nations. They are:

- Maintaining international peace and security;
- Developing friendly relations amongst the nations;
- Achieving international cooperation to solve international issues of social, economic, cultural or humanitarian nature;
- Being a centre to harmonize the actions of the state to accomplish these common goals.

The main objective of these purposes was binding the organization and its members to coordinate their activities in order to accomplish these common goals.
Article 2 of the UN Charter

Article 2 talks about the principles of the United Nations. These principles are:

- Ensuring sovereign equality of all its members. This rule implies that all the members of the UN have equal representation.
- All the members of the UN are required to fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the Charter.
- All the members of the UN are obliged to settle their disputes by peaceful and amicable means in such a manner as to not endanger or jeopardize international peace, security, and justice.
- All the members of the UN are required to desist from giving treats or using force over and against any states' territorial integrity or political independence.
- All the members of the UN are required to abstain from helping or assisting any state against which the UN is taking preventive actions or enforcement actions.
- Ensuring that non-members do not act inconsistently with the Charter. This rule empowers the United Nations in order to maintain peace and security to enforce obligation in the non-members of the state. Further, a non-member state as per Article 35(2) is empowered to bring any dispute before the General Assembly or the Security Council.
- Non-interference of the United Nations in matters relating to the domestic jurisdiction of any state. This rule mandates the United Nations not to interfere where the matter is solely of domestic jurisdiction of a state.

Nicaragua v. the United States

In this case, Nicaragua alleged that the United States carried illegal military and paramilitary operations against Nicaragua by supporting and assisting the Contras causing an extensive loss of lives by attacking its mining ports, naval base, air space, etc. It was also alleged that certain attacks were done not by the Contras but by the United States itself.

The claims of Nicaragua was that

- the United States has violated Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations to ‘refrain from threat and use of force’ and has breached the customary international law obligation.
• The actions of the United States amounted to an interference with the internal affairs of Nicaragua.

The ICJ, in this case, held that the United States has violated international law by involving itself in the unlawful use of force against Nicaragua.

**Article 51 of the UN Charter: Maintenance of peace**

Article 51 empowers the United Nations Security Councils to take measures regarding the maintenance of peace and security. Article 51 provides that the member states have an inherent right of self-defence (individually or collectively) to defend any armed attack against a member of the UN. A member state has to immediately report to the Security Council if it has taken any measures for the exercise of its self-defence.

It further provides that the Security Council’s authority and responsibility can not be affected to take any action that is necessary for the restoration and maintenance of international peace and security.

**Article 13(1) of the UN Charter**

Article 13(1) empowers the General Assembly to initiate studies and make recommendations to:

• Promote international cooperation in the political, social, cultural, educational, economic, and health fields.
• Encourage progressive development of international law and codification of international laws.
• Assist in the realization of Human Rights and fundamental freedom for all.
• Non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language, religion.

**Article 24, 25 and 26 of the UN Charter**

Chapter V of the UN Charter deals with the functions and power of the Security Council under Article 24 and 25 of the Charter.
Article 24 states that:

- The members of the United Nations confer a primary responsibility upon the Security Council of maintaining peace and security for ensuring a prompt and effective action by the UN.
- The Security Council while discharging these duties is obliged to act in accordance with the purpose and principles of the UN.
- The Security Council is required to submit to the General Assembly the annual and special report for its consideration.

Article 25 makes the members of the United Nations accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter”.

Under Article 26 the Security Council with the aid and assistance of the Military Staff Committee is responsible to formulate plans that are to be submitted to the members for establishing a system for regulation of armaments. Further, the security council is required to do so with the slightest diversion for armaments of human and economic resources of the world.

Thus, the United Nations was formed with the motive to find ways to maintain worldwide peace. Since its inception, it has been helping nations deal with the economics, social and humanitarian issues, protecting refugees promoting sustainable development and more.

**Achievements & Failures**

The UN has following achievements to its credit.

**Peace and Security**

- **Maintaining Peace and Security**: By sending peacekeeping and observer missions to the world’s trouble spots over the past six decades, the United Nations has been able to restore calm, allowing many countries to recover from conflict.
- **Preventing Nuclear Proliferation**: For over the five decades, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has served as the world’s nuclear inspector. IAEA experts work to verify that safeguarded nuclear material is used only for peaceful purposes. To date, the Agency has safeguards agreements with more than 180 States.
- **Supporting Disarmament**: UN treaties are the legal backbone of disarmament efforts:
  - the Chemical Weapons Convention-1997 has been ratified by 190 States,
  - the Mine-Ban Convention-1997 by 162,
and the **Arms Trade Treaty-2014** by 69.

- At the local level, UN peacekeepers often work to implement disarmament agreements between warring parties.

  - **Preventing genocide**: The United Nations brought about the first-ever treaty to combat genocide—acts committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

    - The **1948 Genocide Convention** has been ratified by 146 States, which commits to prevent and punish actions of genocide in war and in peacetime. The UN tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as UN-supported courts in Cambodia, have put would-be genocide perpetrators on notice that such crimes would no longer be tolerated.

### Economic Development

- **Promoting Development**: Since 2000, promoting living standards and human skills and potential throughout the world have been guided by the **Millennium Development Goals**.

  - The UN Development Programme (UNDP) supports more than 4,800 projects to reduce poverty, promote good governance, address crises and preserve the environment.

  - The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 150 countries, primarily on child protection, immunization, girls’ education and emergency aid.

  - The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) helps developing countries make the most of their **trade opportunities**.

  - The World Bank provides developing countries with loans and grants, and has supported more than 12,000 projects in more than 170 countries since 1947.

- **Alleviating Rural Poverty**: The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) provides low-interest loans and grants to very poor rural people.

- **Focusing on African Development**: Africa continues to be a high priority for the United Nations. The continent receives **36 per cent of UN system expenditures** for development, the largest share among the world’s regions. All UN agencies have special programmes to benefit Africa.

- Promoting Women's Well-being: **UN Women** is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- Fighting Hunger: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) leads global efforts to defeat hunger. FAO also helps developing countries **to modernize and improve agriculture**, forestry and fisheries practices in ways that conserve natural resources and improve nutrition.

- Commitment in Support of Children: UNICEF has pioneered to provide **vaccines** and other aid desperately needed by children caught in armed conflict. **The Convention on the Rights of the Child-1989** has become law in nearly all countries.

- Tourism: The World Tourism Organization is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
Its **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** seeks to maximize the benefits of tourism while minimizing its negative impact.

- **Global Think Tank:** The United Nations is at the forefront of research that seeks solutions to global problems.
  - The **UN Population Division** is a leading source of information and research on global population trends, producing up-to-date demographic estimates and projections.
  - The **UN Statistics Division** is the hub of the global statistical system, compiling and disseminating global economic, demographic, social, gender, environment and energy statistics.
  - The United Nations Development Programme’s annual **Human Development Report** provides independent, empirically grounded analyses of major development issues, trends and policies, including the groundbreaking **Human Development Index**.
  - The United Nations **World Economic and Social Survey**, the World Bank’s **World Development Report**, the International Monetary Fund’s **World Economic Outlook** and other studies help policymakers to make informed decisions.

**Social Development**

- **Preserving Historic, Cultural, Architectural and Natural Sites:** The UNESCO has helped 137 countries to protect ancient monuments and historic, cultural and natural sites.
  - It has negotiated international conventions to preserve cultural property, cultural diversity and outstanding cultural and natural sites. More than 1,000 such sites have been designated as having exceptional universal value - as **World Heritage Sites**.

- **Taking the lead on global issues:**
  - The first **United Nations conference on the environment** (Stockholm, 1972) helped to alert world public opinion on the dangers faced by our planet, triggering action by governments.
  - The first **world conference on women** (Mexico City, 1985) put women’s right, equality and progress on the global agenda.
  - Other landmark events include the first international conference on human rights (Teheran, 1968), the first **world population conference** (Bucharest, 1974) and the first **world climate conference** (Geneva, 1979).
  - Those events **brought together experts and policymakers, as well as activists**, from around the world, prompting sustained global action.
  - Regular follow-up conferences have helped to **sustain the momentum**.

**Human Rights**

- UN General Assembly adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948**.
  - It has helped to enact dozens of legally binding agreements on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.
UN human rights bodies have focused world attention on cases of torture, disappearance, arbitrary detention and other violations.

- **Fostering Democracy:** The UN promotes and strengthens democratic institutions and practices around the world, including by helping people in many countries to participate in free and fair elections.
  
  - In the 1990s, the UN organized or observed landmark elections in Cambodia, El Salvador, South Africa, Mozambique and Timor-Leste.
  
  - More recently, the UN has provided crucial assistance in elections in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

- **Ending Apartheid in South Africa:** By imposing measures ranging from an arms embargo to a convention against segregated sporting events, the United Nations was a major factor in bringing about the downfall of the apartheid system.
  
  - In 1994, elections in which all South Africans were allowed to participate on an equal basis led to the establishment of a multiracial Government.

- **Promoting Women’s Rights:** The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by 189 countries, has helped to promote the rights of women worldwide.

### Environment

- **Climate change** is a global problem that demands a global solution. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which brings together 2,000 leading climate change scientists, issues comprehensive scientific assessments every five or six years.
  
  - IPCC was established in 1988 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization for the purpose of assessing “the scientific, technical and socioeconomic information relevant for the understanding of the risk of human-induced climate change.
  
  - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides foundation for UN members to negotiate agreements to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change and help countries adapt to its effects. (UNFCCC-1992 is an international environmental treaty adopted and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992.)
  
  - Global Environment Facility, which brings together 10 UN agencies, funds projects in developing countries.

- **Protecting the Ozone Layer:** The UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have been instrumental in highlighting the damage caused to Earth’s ozone layer.
  
  - Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer-1985 provided the framework necessary to create regulatory measures for international reductions in the production of chlorofluorocarbons. Convention provided foundation for Montreal protocol.
The Montreal Protocol-1987 is an international environmental agreement with universal ratification to protect the earth’s ozone layer by eliminating use of ozone depleting substances (ODS) such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons.

- Kigali amendment (to the Montreal Protocol)-2016: was adopted to phase down production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) worldwide.

- **Banning Toxic Chemicals: The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants-2001** seeks to rid the world of some of the most dangerous chemicals ever created.

### International Law

- **Prosecuting War Criminals:** By prosecuting and convicting war criminals, the **UN tribunals established for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda** have helped to expand international humanitarian and international criminal law dealing with genocide and other violations of international law.

- **The International Criminal Court** is an independent permanent court that investigates and prosecutes persons accused of the most serious international crimes—genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes—if national authorities are unwilling or unable to do so.

- **Helping to Resolve Major International Disputes:** By delivering judgments and advisory opinions, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** has helped to settle international disputes involving territorial questions, maritime boundaries, diplomatic relations, State responsibility, the treatment of aliens and the use of force, among others.

- **Stability and Order in the World’s Oceans:**
  - **The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,** which has gained nearly universal acceptance, provides the **legal framework** for all activities in the oceans and seas.
  - It also includes mechanisms for settling disputes.

- **Combating International Crime: The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** works with countries and organizations to counter transnational organized crime by providing legal and technical assistance to fight corruption, money-laundering, drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants, as well as by strengthening criminal justice systems.

  - It has played a key role in brokering and implementing relevant international Treaties, such as the **UN Convention against Corruption-2005** and the **UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime-2003**.

  - It works to reduce the supply of and demand for **illicit drugs** under the three main **UN conventions on drug control**:
    - the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 (amended 1972),
    - the Convention on Psychotropic Substances-1971,
• **Encouraging Creativity and Innovation:** The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) promotes the protection of intellectual property rights and ensures that all countries are in a position to harness the benefits of an effective intellectual property system.

**Humanitarian Affairs**

• **Assisting refugees:** Refugees fleeing **persecution, violence and war** have received aid from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
  
  o UNHCR seeks long-term or "durable" solutions by helping refugees **repatriate** to their homelands, if conditions warrant, or by helping them to integrate in their countries of **asylum** or to resettle in third countries.
  
  o Refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons, mostly women and children, are receiving food, shelter, medical aid, education, and repatriation assistance from the UN.

• **Aiding Palestinian Refugees:** UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a relief and human development agency, has **assisted four generations of Palestinian refugees** with education, health care, social services, microfinance and emergency aid.

• **Reducing the Effects of Natural Disasters:** The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has helped to spare millions of people from the calamitous effects of natural and man-made disasters.
  
  o Its early warning system, which includes thousands of surface monitors, as well as satellites,
    
    • has made it possible to predict with greater accuracy **weather-related disasters**,
    
    • has provided information on the **dispersal of oil spills** and chemical and nuclear leaks and has predicted long-term droughts.

• **Providing Food to the Neediest:** The World Food Programme (WFP) is fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

**Health**

• **Promoting Reproductive and Maternal Health:** United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is promoting the right of individuals to make their own decisions on the number and spacing of their children through **voluntary family planning programmes**.

• **Responding to HIV/AIDS:** United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) coordinates global action against an epidemic that affects some 35 million people.

• **Wiping Out Polio:** Poliomyelitis has been eliminated from all but three countries—Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan—as a result of the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative**.

• **Eradicating Smallpox:** A 13-year effort by the World Health Organization (WHO) resulted in smallpox being declared officially **eradicated from the planet in 1980**.
• Fighting Tropical Diseases:
  o WHO programme - African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control reduced levels of river blindness (onchocerciasis) in 10 West African countries while opening up 25 million hectares of fertile land to farming.
  o Guinea-worm disease is on the verge of being eradicated.
  o Schistosomiasis and sleeping sickness are now under control.
• Halting the Spread of Epidemics
  o Some of the more prominent diseases for which WHO is leading the global response for some of the more prominent diseases including Ebola, meningitis, yellow fever, cholera and influenza, including avian influenza.

Critical Analysis

The new millennium presents the most appropriate time to review the history of this institution, its successes and failures, and expectations for its future.” Opinions may differ about the successes and failure of the United Nations as an instrument for world peace and security. But everyone will agree that it has played a crucial role in the economic and social advancement of the people. United Nation’s efforts in the early Cold War era concentrated on the relationships between nations and the issues of war and peace. Not long into its existence, however, the UN was confronted with the challenges arising from global interdependence and social and economic inequalities. These new realities served to broaden the scope of UN activities and chart the future course of its global involvements. For, with the end of the Cold War, international concerns expanded to include the increasing economic competition between developed countries, problems of development, environmental degradation, population growth, and the threat of nuclear proliferation, the violation of human rights, and political fragmentation or civil wars within national boundaries. It is the UN that is called upon to confront these new challenges and to develop solutions. Some, concerned with a potential loss of national autonomy, prefer unilateral to multilateral action. But, because of its mandated principles, many believe that the UN is the only actor capable of tackling such daunting problems, although they are aware of the UN's inadequacies in putting its principles into action. Thus in the above framework, what should be the role of the United Nations in this new global order? How must the UN be reformed to confront its new challenges? What support should the United States provide for the UN, an institution where it holds significant power? And what lessons have we learned, as an international community, to guide the UN into our future? These are the questions we seek to answer through this discussion. The focus of the discussion is the hope that we have for the future, peace, prosperity and a fairer an more just world. It was these hopes, which led to the establishment of the United Nations following the Second War to devastate the world in the first half of the twentieth century.

Today, we also discuss the topic of hope amidst the despair of the death and destruction of a war in Iraq, and the questioning of the relevance of the UN. The Iraq war represents the failure to resolve an international problem through multilateral channels. For the critics of the United Nations, it represents a failure of that organization. In fact, the UN has been buried many times by critics, but it has survived. It has survived because the would does need a multilateral forum and a framework of international rules to create order and assist security. Whatever difficulty the UN has had in trying to manage divided international opinion over the use of force against Iraq, it is the belief that the UN will be found once more to be essential in managing the post-conflict situation in Iraq. It will be essential firstly in addressing Iraq’s humanitarian needs. While the UN may have been sidelined by countries opting for unilateral action against Iraq, it is somewhat ironic that it may be called upon to pick up the pieces after the conflict. A range of UN agencies –the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UNDP and the Mine Action Service – will spring into action to alleviate hardship and suffering of the civilian population. There will also be the need for UN action to re-establish post-conflict governance and civil
functions in Iraq. Those challenging the relevance of the UN, also, of course, ignore the critical role it plays in wider areas of development, human rights, refugees and the environment. No other organization is able to confront the plethora of cross-border challenges: global diseases including HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB, climate change, environmental degradation, refugee issues, people smuggling, human right, poverty and hunger. It is how it responds to these cross-border challenges. The UN system continues to the international norms by which every member state should abide. In today’s globalizing world, no member state, no matter how powerful it is, can disengage from multilateralism entirely. The UN remains a relevant organisation and will continue to have a central role to play in the 21st century. Notwithstanding media criticism of the United Nations, what seems to be forgotten is that the organisation is only as strong as the will of its member states. The United Nations system relies on the collective will of all its members. It is these member states that set its priorities. The UN cannot act without their consent. It falls therefore upon us all to make the UN relevant in today’s world. In this regard, the United Nations and its members are very aware of the shortcomings of the organisation. For the UN to meet its potential it needs to reform. It needs to better prioritise its work to meet the needs of member states. This was the essence of the Secretary-General’s second term reform initiative, which seeks to strengthen the organisation to better respond to the priorities established in the Millennium Declaration and to meet the needs of Member States. The United Nations is not a perfect organisation, but it remains true that any nation-state can achieve far less in isolation than it can working collectively with other states under UN auspices. The Secretary-General envisaged his role as an intermediary and a person who manages peace institutions and also brought about new techniques to the process of peacekeeping. The UN elucidated what human rights is for the international community. It played an important part in the decolonisation process by giving formal recognitions to the newly independent and formed countries, and also by aiding them in their economic and social development. The UN also played a huge role in the formation of international law. By conducting many international conferences, the UN progressed towards building an international consensus on major global problems such as population, environment, women’s status, development, human rights and such other basic concerns. The UN specialised agencies steered major normative and regulatory arrangements in their respective fields of activities and also gave humanitarian aid in many crisis-riddled parts of the globe. More recently, in spite of many limitations on resources and manpower, the UN has somehow responded to a considerable rise in the demand for peacekeeping forces and other emergency operations in the world. However, in spite of the reasonably good record of the UN, it is the organisation’s drawbacks that receive the highest attention. Many members have remarked about the UN’s disappointing performance but without acknowledging the fact that the organisation can only be as effective as the governments’ allowance of it. No doubt the UN has deficiencies, but it is generally made a scapegoat of the pitfalls of the member states. Today, safeguarding human security in its broadest sense mandates a fresh approach both by the UN and the governments. In the context of enhancing the capacity of the UN to tackle emergencies, there is a need to clarify and rethink its use of military force. Also, the UN response to many problems like resource exhaustion, population explosion, environmental degradation and migration is yet to be completely articulated. Many grave social problems such as women’s position, unemployment of youth, cultural diversity, education and technology impact are being addressed only now.

The UN has not as yet been able to deal effectively with such global economic issues as currency instability, indebtedness, protectionism, and inequitable commercial relations. It the Organization is to realize its potential in the world of the twenty-first century, its members must recognize and resolve a paradox caused by the altered condition of the world. The association of sovereign states set up half-century ago to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” is now expected to function as the public service sector of a world community that does not exist as a political entity. In virtually all of its activities, from peacekeeping to development, from human rights to environmental accords, the United Nations is being asked to play a larger role and to assume fresh responsibilities at a time when governments are increasingly anxious to reduce their financial contributions, and increasingly reluctant to provide the necessary political, military and material support. Governments will only give the needed support if they see the United Nations as essential for advancing their interests in an effective and appropriate manner. Grappling with their current concerns, governments con not be expected to invest in totally new formulas of international organization or world government. The Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations
was convened by the Ford Foundation in late 1993 at the request of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to reassess the role, mission, and function of the United Nations. The Working Group’s Report, The United Nations in Its Second Half-century was presented to the Secretary-General and released to the public in 1995. The working group was chaired by Moeen Qureshi, former Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Richard von Weiszacker, former President of Germany. Throughout these Report, it has been repeatedly stressed the need for the Member States to provide the leadership, common will and purpose which are necessary to create a more effective United Nations as it enters its next fifty years. The future United Nations System Change will not come easily. A great gulf often exists between what is ideal and what is politically possible. For now, the key to progress is to understand the paradox which confronts the UN, and to work more effectively through existing mechanisms or, where further change is necessary, to improve those mechanisms. The UN’s galaxy of organizations must be made to operate as an integrated system within the framework of agreed policies. Its activities, including peacekeeping, development and social programs, must complement each other. Its work has to gain a greater understanding among the private and nongovernmental sectors, the public and the media. These goals are reachable. Indeed, they must be reached soon, if the United Nations is the fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world whom it was set up to serve. What might a successful UN system look like some decades hence, when our children and grandchildren confront these global challenges? Such a vision need not imply a total transformation of today’s world.

Challenges & Reforms

UN Administrative & Financial-Resources Challenges

- **Development Reform:** Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) will require bold changes to the UN Development System (UNDS) for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, centred on a strategic UN Development Assistance Framework and led by an impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinator.

- **Management Reform:** To confront global challenges and to remain relevant in a fast-changing world, United Nations must empower managers and staff, simplifies processes, increases accountability and transparency and improves on the delivery of our mandates.
  - There are concerns for improving efficiency, avoidance of duplication, and the minimization of waste in the functioning of the entire UN system.

- **Financial Resources:** Contributions of the Member States should have, as their fundamental underpinning, the capacity to pay principle.
  - The Member States should pay their contributions unconditionally, in full and on time, as delays in payments have caused an unprecedented financial crisis in the UN system.
  - Financial reforms hold the key to the future of the world body. Without sufficient resources, the UN's activities and role would suffer.

Peace and Security issues

- **Threats to Peace and Security:** The range of potential threats to peace and security that UN has to face, are following-
  - poverty, disease, and environmental breakdown (the threats to human security identified in the Millennium Development Goals),
  - conflict between states,
violence and massive human rights violations within states,

terrorism threats from organized crime,

and the proliferation of weapons - particularly WMD, but also conventional.

- **Terrorism**: Nations that support groups that are widely linked to terrorism, such as Pakistan, are not held accountable specifically for these actions. To this date, the UN still does not have a clear definition of terrorism, and they have no plans to pursue one.

- **Nuclear Proliferation**: In 1970, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was signed by 190 nations. Despite this treaty, nuclear stockpiles remain high, and numerous nations continue to develop these devastating weapons. The failure of the non-proliferation treaty details the ineffectiveness of the United Nations and their inability to enforce crucial rules and regulations on offending nations.

### Security Council reforms

- **Composition of Security Council**: It has remained largely static, while the UN General Assembly membership has expanded considerably.
  
  - In 1965, the membership of the Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15. There was no change in the number of permanent members. Since then, the size of the Council has remained frozen.
  
  - This has undermined the representative character of the Council. An expanded Council, which is more representative, will also enjoy greater political authority and legitimacy.
  
  - India has been calling for the reform of the UN Security Council along with Brazil, Germany and Japan (G-4). The four countries support each others' bids for the permanent seats in the top UN body.
  
  - Any expansion of permanent members' category must be based on an agreed criteria, rather than be a pre-determined selection.

- **UNSC Veto power**: It is often observed that UN's effectiveness and responsiveness to international security threats depends on judiciously use of the UNSC veto.
  
  - **Veto Power**: The five permanent members enjoy the luxury of veto power; when a permanent member vetoes a vote, the Council resolution cannot be adopted, regardless of international support. Even if the other fourteen nations vote yes, a single veto will beat this overwhelming show of support.
  
  - There are proposals on future of Veto power:
    - limiting the use of the veto to vital national security issues;
    - requiring agreement from multiple states before exercising the veto;
    - abolishing the veto entirely;

  - Any reform of the veto will be very difficult:
Articles 108 and 109 of the United Nations Charter grant the P5 (5 permanent members) veto over any amendments to the Charter, requiring them to approve of any modifications to the UNSC veto power that they themselves hold.

Non-Conventional Challenges

- Since its creation, UN is working with goal of safeguarding peace, protecting human rights, establishing the framework for international justice and promoting economic and social progress. New challenges, such as climate change, refugees and population ageing are new fields it has to work.

  - Climate Change: From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.

  - Growing population: The world population is projected to increase by more than one billion people within the next 15 years, reaching 8.5 billion in 2030, and to increase further to 9.7 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100.
    - The world population growth rate must slow down significantly to avoid reaching unsustainable levels.

  - Population Ageing: It is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties.

  - Refugees: The world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.
    - An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home by conflict and persecution at the end of 2016.
    - Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.
    - There are also 10 million stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

Conclusion

- Despite having many short-comings, UN has played a crucial role making this human society more civil, more peaceful & secure in comparison to time of its origin at 2nd World War.

- United Nations, being the world’s largest democratic body of all nations, its responsibility towards humanity is very high in terms of building democratic society, economic development of people living in acute poverty, & preserving the Earth’s Ecosystem in concern with Climate Change.
References

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