

Principal Organs of the UN

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The United Nations is an international organization that strives to maintain world peace and ensure security for all mankind. It also strives to foster friendly relations among nations.

The UN functions through its 6 principal organs. They are:

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

General Assembly

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is the chief policy-making and representative body of the UN.
- It is the only UN body where all the UN members are represented. So, all 193 member countries are represented here.
- The GA is headed by a President who is elected for a one-year tenure.
- The GA is headquartered in New York, USA.
- The UNGA meets once a year in September.
 - This annual GA session happens in the General Assembly Hall in New York.
- The Assembly also meets at other times of the year depending on the tasks.
- The UNGA can make recommendations to countries on matters within its competence.

Functions of the UNGA

- Consider and approve the UN budget and establish the financial assessments of member countries
- Elect the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council and the members of other UN organs and councils and, on the recommendation of the UNSC, appoint the Secretary-General;
- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international security and peace, including disarmament
- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security
- Discuss any question within the scope of the UN Charter
- Conduct studies and make recommendations to encourage global political cooperation,
- the codification and development of international law, the realization of human rights & fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the social, economic, cultural, humanitarian, health and educational fields;
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might hamper the friendly relations between nations;

Voting in the UNGA:

- ❑ Every member has one vote in the GA.
- ❑ Most questions are decided by a simple majority, however, budgetary questions, election to the UNSC, and ECOSOC require a 2/3rd majority vote.
- ❑ In recent times, the UNGA has been striving to make decisions based on consensus among all member countries.

The primary responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the world lies with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The UNSC has 15 member states, five of whom are permanent members.

The 10 non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years each, on a regional basis.

Out of the 10 temporary members, five are from Asia or Africa, two are from Latin America, one from Eastern Europe, and two from Western Europe or other regions.

The five permanent member countries are the USA, the UK, France, Russia, and China.

Decisions are taken by the Council by vote, that is if 9 out of the 15 members vote 'yes'. However, if any of the permanent members vote 'no', that is, use their veto power, then the resolution is not passed.

Each of the permanent members possesses the Veto Power to any resolution of the UNSC.

■ This is seen as the most undemocratic feature of the UN.

But, during the formation of the UN, the USA refused to be a part of the UN unless it was given the power to veto.

The League of Nations was an ineffective organization partly because of the absence of the US. Hence, this condition of the US was accepted.

Critics of the permanent members' veto power also opine that it is this feature that prevents many conflicts from being resolved.

The members of the UNSC must carry out the decisions taken by the Council; they are legally binding.

The UNSC is headquartered in New York.