

Main Committees of the General Assembly

Because of the great number of questions, which the Assembly is called upon, to consider the Assembly allocates most questions to its six Main Committees:

- First Committee** **Disarmament and International Security Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/first/first.htm>
The Disarmament and Security Committee (DiSec) works to make the world safe. Their duties range from eliminating nuclear weapons to eliminating international terrorism. They make it their business to not just prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, but to eliminate many of those already in existence.
- Second Committee** **Economic and Financial Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/second/second.htm>
The Economic and Financial Committee (EcoFin) works to regulate the world economy. They deal in issues ranging from international debt to protective tariffs. Their job is to create fairness in global trade and to ensure the protection of world industry.
- Third Committee** **Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/third/third.htm>
The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SocHum) works to improve the social conditions around the world with a strong focus on human and civil rights. Their duties range from protecting women's suffrage to protecting the rights of immigrants. It is their difficult job to ensure that civil rights are preserved without destroying important cultural traditions.
- Fourth Committee** **Special Political and Decolonization Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/fourth/fourth.htm>
The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SpecPol) has some of the broadest responsibilities in the United Nations. Their duties can be anything from treaties dealing with outer space to electoral reform in developing nations. The guiding principle of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee is that all nations have a right to self-determination. It seeks to free nations of the world from colonization they did not agree to.
- Fifth Committee** **Administrative and Budgetary Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/fifth/fifth.htm>
The Administrative and Budgetary Committee does the work that allows all other committees to function. They ensure the day to day tasks of the United Nations are done as efficiently as possible as well as making appropriations for programs based on requests from other committees.
- Sixth Committee** **Legal Committee**
<http://www.un.org/ga/54/sixth/sixth.htm>
The Legal Committee deals with issues best resolved through matters of law. They deal with legal disputes between nations of the world. They address issues of international law as pertaining to current issues, and often work with the ICC and ICJ. A large number of delegates who serve in the legal committee are, themselves, lawyers.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

<http://www.un.org/Overview/Organs/ecosoc.html>

The Economic and Social Council has 54 members, elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. Their responsibilities as set forth in the UN Charter are to promote:

- higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation;
- Universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

Its functions and powers are

- to serve as the central forum for the discussion of international economic and social issues of a global or inter-disciplinary nature and the formulation of policy
- recommendations on those issues addressed to Member States and to the United Nations system;
- to make or initiate studies and reports and make recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters;
- to promote respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- to call international conferences and prepare draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly on matters falling within its competence;
- to negotiate agreements with the specialized agencies defining their relationship with the United Nations;
- to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies by means of consultations with and recommendations to them and by means of recommendations to the General Assembly and the Members of the United Nations;
- to perform services, approved by the Assembly, for Members of the United Nations and, on request, for the specialized agencies;
- To consult with non-governmental organizations concerned with matters with which the Council deals.

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

<http://www.icj-cij.org>

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and it began work in 1946. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). The Court has a dual role: to settle in accordance with international law the legal disputes submitted to it by States, and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by duly authorized international organs and agencies. It is comprised of 15 international judges.

SECURITY COUNCIL

<http://www.un.org/Overview/Organs/sc.html>

The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is so organized as to be able to function continuously, and a representative of each of its members must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters.

When a complaint concerning a threat to peace is brought before it, the Council's first action is usually to recommend to the parties to try to reach agreement by peaceful means. In some cases, the Council itself undertakes investigation and mediation. It may appoint special representatives or request the Secretary-General to do so or to use his good offices. It may set forth principles for a peaceful settlement.

When a dispute leads to fighting, the Council's first concern is to end it as soon as possible. On many occasions, the Council has issued cease-fire directives, which have been instrumental in preventing wider hostilities. It also sends U.N. peacekeeping forces to help reduce tensions in troubled areas, keep opposing forces apart and create conditions of calm in which peaceful settlements may be sought. The Council has 15 members-- five permanent members and 10 elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The five permanent members are Russia, France, China, the United Kingdom and the United States.

SECRETARIAT

<http://www.un.org/Overview/Organs/secretariat.html>

The Secretariat, an international staff working at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and all over the world, carries out the diverse day-to-day work of the Organization. It services the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programs and policies laid down by them. At its head is the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five- year, renewable term. More than 25,000 men and women from some 160 countries make up the Secretariat staff. Duties include:

- administering peace-keeping operations
- mediating international disputes
- surveying economic and social trends and problems
- prepare studies on subjects such as human rights and sustainable development;
- organize international conferences on issues of world-wide concern

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES

The text of most of the following agreements can be found in here:

<http://www.unog.ch/disarm/distreat/warfare.htm>. Bookmark your browser now!

Geneva Convention (1864-1977) - Nations of the world met in 1864, 1868, 1906, 1925, 1929, 1949 and 1977 to establish and revise rules for war, including the treatment of prisoners of war, types of weapons allowed, and the treatment of noncombatants.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (1972) - In the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems the United States and the Soviet Union agreed that each could have only two ABM deployment areas, so restricted and so located that they could not provide a nationwide ABM defense or become the basis for developing one. Precise quantitative and qualitative limits were imposed on the ABM systems that may be deployed. A protocol was signed in 1976 to reduce the number of areas to one. It was further modified numerous times until 2001 when U.S. President George W. Bush announced the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement.

Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) - Spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere – without discrimination – have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. It specifically bans the use of children as soldiers, establishing a minimum age of 18. Every nation in the world except for the United States and Somalia have ratified it, though both indicate that they will ratify.

Kyoto Protocol (1992) - An agreement signed in 1992 by the nations of the world to help fight global warming and help stop climate change by setting legally binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. U.S. President George W. Bush withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol in 2001.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1996) - Agreement signed by over 140 countries, promising not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. On May 11, 1997 India tested a nuclear weapon casting doubt on the ability to enforce the treaty. In 2003 North Korea threatened to violate the treaty by testing its own nuclear weapon.

Ottawa Treaty (1997) - A ban on the stockpiling of anti-personal land mines signed by 147 nations. The agreement also banned the use of any land mine. The United States and the Russian Federation did not sign the treaty, along with 45 other nations.

The Rome Statute: International Criminal Court (1997) - The International Court of Justice handles cases between states, not individuals. The International Criminal Court can hear cases concerning individual crimes against humanity and war crimes taking the place of ad-hoc tribunals and to take over when national criminal justice institutions are unwilling or unable to act. U.S. President George W. Bush refused to allow the United States to sign on, citing fears about U.S. diplomats and soldiers being "dragged" into the Court.

MAJOR EVENTS IN UN HISTORY

There is an array of significant international events that have taken place in the United Nations era. The following is in no way intended to be a comprehensive list. Included in this list are significant events the United Nations has been involved in, or events so monumental that they fundamentally changed the world.

Israeli Independence (1947) - After the Holocaust the world felt very guilty about the treatment of the Jews. A Jewish homeland (Israel) in British Palestine was established after great debate. The indigenous Palestinians objected and conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors has existed ever since.

Korean War (1950-1953) - On June 25, 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea in an effort to unite the Korean peninsula under communist rule. The United Nations responded by sending troops to fight in an area for the first time. The three-year war resulted in a stalemate and took over 3,000 lives of United Nations troops. A demilitarized zone now separates the two Koreas.

Hungary Uprising (1956) - In 1956 the people of Hungary rose up in revolt against its Soviet puppet government. Despite the pleas of Hungarian citizens, the United Nations declined to aid the revolt and it was quashed by the Russians.

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) - In October 1962 the world was on the brink of nuclear war after the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles in Cuba and the American president, John Kennedy, demanded they be removed. After several tense days, the Russian premier, Nikita Khrushchev, relented to Kennedy's demand.

South Africa (1963-1994) - The Afrikaner ruling party created a system of racial segregation known as Apartheid in the 1940s in order for the white minority to dominate the black majority. Beginning in 1963 the UN imposed a series of embargoes and sanctions on South Africa in an attempt to encourage an end to the racist system. South Africa finally held free elections in 1994.

Cyprus (1964-Present) – When Cyprus became an independent country in 1960 the two ethnic groups in the country, the Greeks and Turks, both sought power. In 1964 U.N. peacekeeping troops were sent in to keep order. In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus and Greece also sent troops to the island, resulting in a war which ended with the creation of the Turkish Northern Cyprus and the Greek Cyprus. This is still a trouble spot.

Small Pox Eradication (1967-1980) – The World Health Organization decided in 1967 to end the smallpox virus by vaccinating every person in the world. This program saved over one billion dollars a year by sending U.N. doctors to all the developing nations where smallpox was a problem. In 1980 the WHO proudly stated that Smallpox has been eradicated.

Cambodia (1989-1993) – The nation of Cambodia had been dealing with war ever since the Vietnam era. In 1979 after the brutal Khmer Rouge were overthrown, a guerrilla war started between the Khmer Rouge and the new puppet Vietnamese government. In 1989 the United Nations sent peacekeeping troops into the country to hold elections. The U.N. personal survived numerous attacks by Khmer Rouge guerrillas and in 1993 Cambodia finally held its election, creating a new government and constitution for the country.

Fall of the Soviet Union (1989-1992) – After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the Soviet Union began to crumble. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed, creating 15 new nations which temporarily banded together as the Commonwealth of Independent States before becoming distinct nations. The United Nations decided to accept the membership of each of the former Soviet Republics.

Persian Gulf Wars (1990-1991, 2003) - In August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and the United Nations sent troops to Saudi Arabia to protect it from invasion. The United Nations authorized the use of force if Iraq did not remove its forces from Kuwait by a specified deadline. When the deadline passed the United States and several of its U.N. allies drove Iraq from Kuwait. With Saddam Hussein still in power in 2003, the United States sought the overthrow of his government. Members of the Security Council, including France, Germany and Russia, refused to authorize the use of force. Consequently, the United States and Great Britain acted alone in removing Hussein from power.

Somalia (1992-1994) - In 1992 clan warfare in Somalia caused famine on a horrible scale; over 300,000 people died of starvation. U.N. troops were sent to keep the peace while famine relief could get to its intended end. Guerrilla attacks against U.N. forces by the clans and the public led to a U.N. withdrawal, and an unsuccessful mission.

Bosnia (1992-1995) - When the Yugoslav region of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence, its three major groups the Croats, Muslims and Serbs became engaged in a civil war. Serb forces started committing acts of genocide against Muslims. The United Nations intervened, proving instrumental in removing Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic from power, and installing a fragile peace.

East Timor (1998-Present) – In 1974 the Portuguese left the island of East Timor. The Indonesians invaded forcing East Timor to become a part of Indonesia. Opposing the Indonesian intervention, the Timorese demanded elections be held. In 1998 East Timor voted for independence. Indonesian troops started a wave of violence and then the United Nations forced Indonesia to pull out. East Timor became independent in 2002 and about to become a member of the United Nations.

COUNTRY PROFILE

DO NOT merely print out the CIA Fact book or news articles. Although both are useful sources, the point is for you to find the information and then put it into a coherent format *in your own words*. Please make a note of any useful web sites you find and forward them to the Librarian.

POLITICAL

- Official name of country
- Type of government
- Top two government officials and role in government; political party currently in power
- Top ten International Organization affiliations
- Size of armed forces
- Allies, enemies, bloc
- Major rights and freedoms granted/withheld
- Goal, mission statement (from website)

GEOGRAPHY

- Major cities and capitol
- Continent
- Surrounding Nations
- Map (optional)

CULTURE

- Ethnic and religious composition
- Population, distribution and growth rate

ECONOMIC

- Gross Domestic Product (total and per capita)
- Major agricultural and industrial products
- Major exports and imports + Balance of Trade (who, what, where)
- Trading partners

HISTORY WITHIN THE UN

- Date of admission
 - Participation in committees
 - **Major** agreements signed/sponsored; conferences attended
- Participation in UN actions

RESEARCH BASIS FOR UN

- <http://www.un.org/english/> - United Nations Website
- http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes - U.S. State Department's Background Notes
- <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html> - U. S. Department of the Army Area Handbook Series
- <http://www.embpage.org/> - Embassy Newsletters and Publications
- http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/modelun/experts_2.asp -Model UN Research Tips
- http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/modelun/prep_tips.html- Model UN Preparation Tips
- <http://www.idia.net/> - Institute for Domestic and International Affairs (RUMUN, PhillyMUN, RMC)
- <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/> - CIA World Fact Book
- Find your individually UN supported country website

TOP SECRET SEVEN STEP UN RESEARCH STRATEGY

1. Familiarize yourself with the country that you are representing
2. Gather Background Information on the United Nations Organization
3. Gather Background Information on the Assigned Issues
4. Review Speeches at the UN by the Country's Representatives
5. Review Policy Statements from the Country's Political Leadership
6. Study the Texts of Resolutions Sponsored by the Country

Develop an Understanding of the Country's Voting Pattern