



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A bit of history	p. 7
How does the UN work?	p. 14
The UN “system”	p. 24
What is the purpose of the United Nations?	p. 28
How much does the United Nations cost?	p. 40
The United Nations today and tomorrow ...	p. 43
Useful addresses	p. 45
Glossary	p. 47

In the everyday life of the Organization, English and French are the working languages of the Secretariat.



WHERE DOES THE UN WORK?

Since 1947 the UN Headquarters are located in New York but the Organization also has offices in Geneva (Switzerland) and Vienna (Austria) as well as programmes and services in Nairobi (Kenya), Addis-Aba-ba (Ethiopia), Bangkok (Thailand), Amman (Jordan) and Santiago (Chile).

The UN also has information centres in several capital cities, charged with informing the general public, the socio-professional circles and the media of its activities.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

The United Nations is the largest employer of linguistic specialists in the world. Within the Language Services there are a large number of interpreters, translators, editors, précis-writers, terminologists, multilingual reference assistants, copywriters and proof-readers.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

In many countries, especially developing countries, UN resident coordinators supervise the technical coordination and humanitarian aid programmes.

WHAT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN AT THE UN?

The official UN languages are Arab, Chinese, English, French Spanish, and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation is provided in all these languages during all official meetings, and all the documentation is translated into these languages.



United Nations Headquarters, New York City.

How does the UN work?

Different bodies ensure the functioning of the UN. Created by the UN Charter, they are now: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. A Trusteeship Council that had been created to supervise the administration of former Trust Territories ceased its activities in 1994 after these territories became autonomous or independent.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the main organ of UN deliberations, receiving the reports of all other bodies. Its annual session* begins in September at the UN headquarters in New York, and often lasts well into the New Year.

The General Assembly is where each year the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of nearly all the countries in the world, as well as a number of Heads of State and Government, declare their views on major international problems and the activities of the Organization. It is also a place where they can talk to each other on neutral territory and far from the spotlights and official diplomatic encounters.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

Each Member State, whatever its importance, has only one vote in the United Nations.



The General Assembly elects a President and twenty-one vice-presidents at least three months prior to the session they will preside. They will begin in their function only when the session opens and will remain in office until the session is closed.



General Assembly on the problem of drugs in the world, 19 April 2016.



The work of the General Assembly is in general carried out by six specialized committees. Depending on the subject, open to representatives from all the Member States. At the end of the session, each committee presents its report to the Assembly with proposals for resolutions* to be adopted in a plenary session.

Each day nearly 3000 diplomats meet in these committees and working groups. The facilities thus offered by the UN to international negotiations, this multilateral diplomacy*, form part of the most original and useful role of the Organization.

The resolutions of the General Assembly are normally adopted by simple majority. There is, however, an organized will to reach a consensus (i.e. the adoption of a resolution by the representatives of all the Member States without requiring a vote) although this is not always possible. Member States are not obliged to apply the Resolutions of the General Assembly. It is therefore even more important that they be adopted unanimously.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

Extraordinary sessions that may last several days, of the General Assembly may be called for urgent reasons or to bring to the attention of the members states a matter of exceptional importance.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

A member state that does not pay its contribution to the budget of the United Nations may lose its right to vote in the General Assembly.

António Guterres (Portugal) succeeded Ban Ki-moon (Korea) on 1 January 2017.

In 2004, he was appointed by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, as UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva. He was in this post from 2005 to December 2015.

He was Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002, during which period he played a major role in the international action undertaken to put an end to the crisis in Timor Leste.

Mr. Guterres was born in Lisbon in 1949, and holds a diploma in Engineering from the Instituto Superior Técnico. He speaks Portuguese, English, French and Spanish fluently.



Trygve Lie
(Norway)
1946-52.



Dag Hammarskjöld
(Sweden)
1953-61.



U Thant
(Myanmar)
1961-71.



Kurt Waldheim
(Austria)
1972-81.



Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
(Peru)
1982-91.



Boutros Boutros-Ghali
(Egypt)
1992-96.



Kofi Annan
(Ghana)
1997-2006.



Ban Ki-moon
(Korea)
2007-16.



António Guterres
(Portugal)
Since
January 2017.

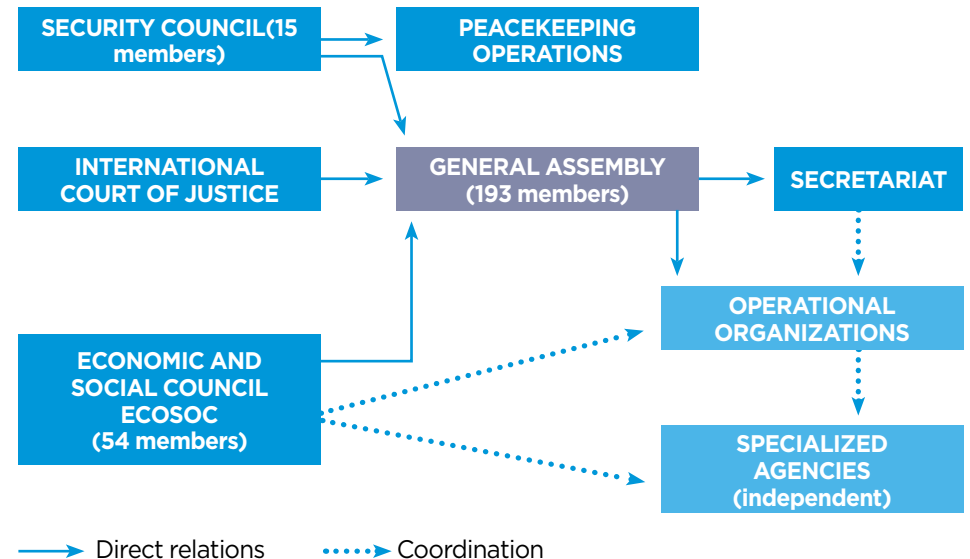
THE OPERATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Over the years since the creation of the UN, a number of operational international bodies have been set up, in addition to the Secretariat, to intervene directly, especially in developing regions, where urgent action is required.

Each of these bodies has its own decision-making organ and a budget but their directors and staff remain under the authority of the Secretary-General of the UN. The main ones are: the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



THE UN SYSTEM (SIMPLIFIED)





Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture



ITU: The International Telecommunications Union is a UN specialized agency for technological information and communication

UNESCO: The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is concerned with a wide range of subjects including training teachers, the improvement of education at the world level, and the protection of the world's most valuable historical and cultural sites. UNESCO regularly includes new sites on its world heritage list, thus preserving these irreplaceable treasures for the pleasure of tourists today and tomorrow.

UNIDO: The UN Industrial Development Organization is the specialized agency that promotes industrial development in order to reduce poverty, inclusive globalisation and to save the environment

UPU: The Universal Postal Union is the main forum of cooperation between the different postal sectors ensuring, thus, a universal network of products and services at the cutting-edge of progress.



WIPO: The World Intellectual Property Organization provides a wide range of services all over the world to protect intellectual property outside of frontiers and to settle disputes outside of tribunals.

WHO: The World Health Organization is the authority that manages and coordinates efforts to bring all people in the world to the best possible level of health. Its aim is to improve perspectives for the future and the health of the world's population.

WMO: The World Meteorological Organization promotes the world-wide exchange of information and data on the climate, and contributes to the use of meteorology, inter alia, in aviation, maritime transport and agriculture.

The mission of the **World Bank** is to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life world-wide by proposing low-interest loans, interest-free credit and fellowships to developing countries to invest in education, health, infrastructures and communications.

WTO: The World Tourism Organization is the UN body charged with promoting responsible and durable tourism open to all.

How much does the United Nations **cost**?

There is a tendency to believe that the United Nations is a financial sinkhole. This is not true. Below are some figures with comparisons to measure their relative value.

THE UN BUDGET

On 26 December 2017, the General Assembly adopted a budget of 5.4 billion dollars for the period 2018-2019.

This budget covers UN activities in different fields, notably political, international justice and law, international cooperation for development, human rights and humanitarian action and public information.

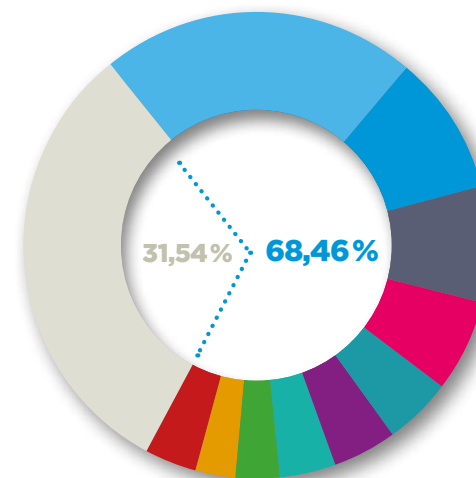
Each year, the UN allocates around 2.75 billion dollars for essential expenses, such as the functioning of its services at New York, Geneva, and elsewhere in the world. In comparison, this sum represents only about 5% of the budget of a town like New York.

THE BUDGET FOR PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

The budget of 6.8 billion dollars adopted by the UN for peacekeeping operations during the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 amounts to only 1% of military expenditure in the world.

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

The UN mobilises 12.4 billion dollars of humanitarian aid to come to the assistance of those in urgent need.



Ten countries cover nearly 70% of expenses.



WHO PAYS?

The budget of the UN comes from all Member States in proportion to the national income of each country. The richest countries are therefore the highest contributors. Ten countries provide for 70% of the Organization's expenses. For the period 2016-2018, and for each the budgetary year, the distribution is as follows: United States (22%), Japan (9.68%), China (7.92%), Germany (6.34%), France (4.86%), United Kingdom (4.46%), Brazil (3.82%), Russia (3.09%), Canada (2.92%) and Australia (2.33%).

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The UN is regularly faced with considerable financial difficulties. Some governments delay their payments which obliges the UN to take measures of austerity.

The UN and other organizations of the system are, thus, often obliged to cut into programmes that are eagerly awaited in the countries and by the populations. They also frequently have to reduce their staff like enterprises in the private sector,

DO YOU KNOW THAT...

When the contributing countries are ranked according to the amount paid by each citizen, the situation is different: the amount paid by an American is \$1 per year, while that of a French citizen is \$1.41.



arise all over the world would certainly be far more serious were there no means to put pressure on the disputing parties.

Who could provide the massive humanitarian aid necessary in dramatic situations (war or major catastrophes) that are in most cases brought to the victims by the United Nations? Violations of human rights would certainly be more flagrant if there were not a world institution to denounce them. Might the international aid brought to developing countries by the United Nations, with no political implications, disappear?

Reform the Organization of the United Nations? Of course! Get rid of it? Certainly not! If the Organization were suddenly to disappear, it would be necessary to reinvent it. International public opinion must not only show its support but also encourage the United Nations to even better address the challenges that will arise.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The United Nations :
www.un.org

Gateway to a career in the United Nations
<https://careers.un.org>

The United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC)
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