

The United Nations: An Introduction for Students



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

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the UN Charter had been ratified by a majority of the original 51 Member States. The day is now celebrated each year around the world as United Nations Day.

The purpose of the United Nations is to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people. It affords the opportunity for countries to balance global interdependence and national interests when addressing international problems.

There are currently 192 Members of the United Nations. They meet in the General Assembly, which is the closest thing to a world parliament. Each country, large or small, rich or poor, has a single vote, however, none of the decisions taken by the Assembly are binding. Nevertheless, the Assembly's decisions become resolutions that carry the weight of world governmental opinion.

The United Nations Headquarters is in New York City but the land and buildings are international territory. The United Nations has its own flag, its own post office and its own postage stamps. Six official languages are used at the United Nations - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The senior officer of the United Nations Secretariat is the Secretary-General.

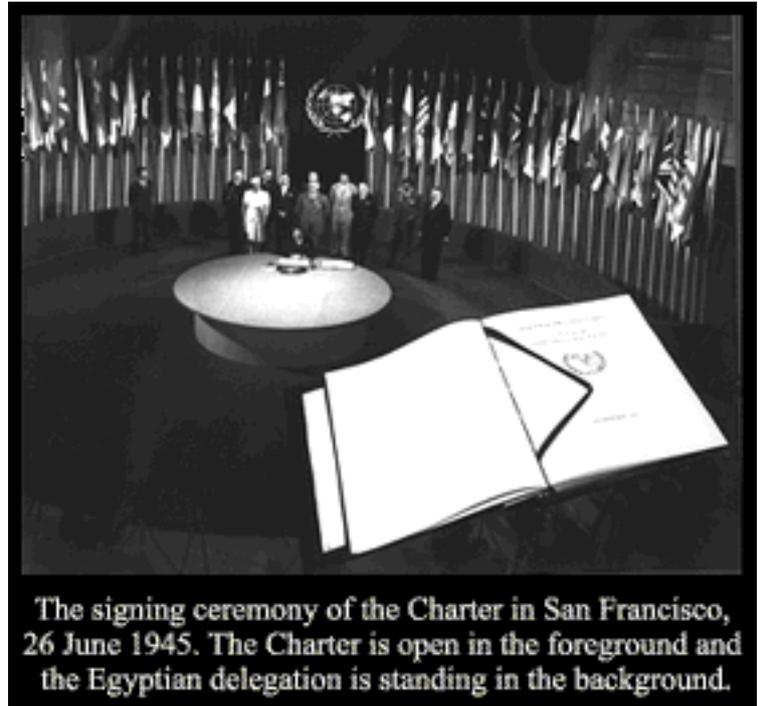
The United Nations was created after World War II to provide an international forum that would develop positive relationships between countries, promote peace and security around the world, and establish international cooperation in solving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.

The Aims of the United Nations:

- To keep peace throughout the world.
- To develop friendly relations between nations.
- To work together to help people live better lives, to eliminate poverty, disease and illiteracy in the world, to stop environmental destruction and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms.
- To be a centre for helping nations achieve these aims.

The major organizations of the U.N. are the Secretariat, the Security Council, and the General Assembly.

- **The Secretariat** is the administrative center of UN operations, and is headed by the Secretary-General, who is the director of the United Nations.



- **The Security Council** is responsible for establishing and maintaining international peace. Its main purpose is to prevent war by settling disputes between nations. The Security Council has 15 members. There are five permanent members: the United States, the Russian Federation, Britain, France, and China; and 10 temporary members who serve two-year terms.
- **The General Assembly** is the world's forum for discussing matters affecting world peace and security, and for making recommendations concerning them. It has no power of its own to enforce decisions. It is composed of the 51 original member nations and those admitted since, a total of 192.

United Nations Day is celebrated on 24th October every year!