



UN's 77th Anniversary

Why in News?

Recently, the World has celebrated the 77th anniversary of the [United Nations\(UN\)](#) on 24th October 2022.

What is the UN?

▪ About:

- The United Nations (UN) is an **international organization founded in 1945**. It is currently made up of **193 Member States**.
- Its mission and work are 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:

- 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 the **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."
- United Nations Conference on International Organization (1945).
 - 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 intergovernmental organization.

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

- **General Assembly**
- **Security Council**
- **Economic and Social Council**
- **Trusteeship Council**
- [International Court of Justice](#)
- **UN Secretariat.**

▪ Funds and Programmes:

- [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)
- [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#)
- [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#)
- [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)
- [United Nations Human Settlements Programme \(UN-Habitat\)](#)
- [World Food Programme \(WFP\).](#)

▪ Specialized Agencies:

- [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#)
- [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#)
- [International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#)
- [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#)
- [IMF](#)
- [World Bank](#)
- [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#)
- [International Telecommunication Union \(ITU\)](#)
- [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#)
- [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [UNCTAD](#)
- [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#)
- [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#)
- [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific \(ESCAP\)](#)

What are the UN's Contributions so Far?

- **Increment in the UN membership:**
 - Post- 1960's decolonisation, the membership of the UN expanded from about 50 members to double.
- **Decolonisation:**
 - It was the UN which played the lead role in the 1960 decolonisation and helped around 80 colonies in gaining their freedom.
- **Involvement with Civil Society:**
 - The UN is no more an organisation of nations only, more and more UN bodies have begun engaging with the people within the nations, experts, intellectuals and media with time.
- **Better Sustenance:**
 - The UN has successfully sustained itself till now, as compared to the League of Nations, which is an achievement.
- **Peacekeeping:**
 - The UN has successfully prevented World War - III.

What are the UN's Major Setbacks?

- **Arm Races and Cold War:**
 - Although, the WW-III has been successfully prevented till date, violence, arm races, nuclear races and cold wars still occur among nations.
- **Power Suppressing Principles:**
 - The world body still continues to see a tussle between 'principle' and 'power'.
 - While the hopes of a peaceful and just world are represented by the UN, the most powerful states are privileged by granting them commanding heights over international politics via the undemocratic instruments of veto power and permanent seats in the [UN Security Council \(UNSC\)](#).
- **Not a Multipolar Organisation:**
 - The UN has been unable to present itself as a multipolar and multilateral organisation.
 - At the time of formation, the UN had 5 permanent members with a total of 51 members, presently, it has 193 members but permanent members in the UN General Assembly are still 5.
- **Laggard in Holistic Growth:**
 - The organisation had not been able to cope up with the increasing globalisation.
 - The UN has been a laggard in overall development; no institutional arrangement is there to deal in particular with Pandemics or new technologies such as [Artificial Intelligence](#).

What is the Significance of India at UN?

- **India and the UN:**
 - India is **one of the founding members** of the UN.

- Since its independence and even before that, India has been an active participant in all initiatives undertaken by the UN like Millennium Development Goals, **Sustainable development goals** and various UN summits, including on climate change.
- **Maintaining peace:**
 - As far as the peacekeeping ambit of the UN is concerned, India has performed quite well in maintaining peaceful and friendly relations with most of the nations.
- **India and UNSC:**
 - India has been elected as a **non-permanent member of the UNSC** for two years in January 2021.
 - The non-permanent membership of India can be taken as an opportunity to convince the like-minded nations for fighting international terrorism.
 - Moreover, India should also focus upon sitting upon the apex body in future; becoming a permanent member of the UN.
- **Raising concern over need of reforms:**
 - India has realised the urgent need of reforms in the UN specially at the UNSC and has raised concerns over the issue.
 - Developing nations, including India, now play a larger role in both the international economy and politics. But these changes are not reflected in the UNSC, where all critical decisions are still being taken by the veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council.

Way Forward

- The UN has survived and thrived and has certainly seen incremental changes over the last 75 years but the time has come for the UN to change and change for the better.
- UNSC is in desperate need to undergo reforms, the sooner the better, the later the more redundant.
- In a nutshell, as far as the whole UN is concerned complete reform is needed with principles not to be written by the most powerful anymore.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question

Prelims

Q. 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', often seen in the news, is (2015)

- (a) a strategy to tackle the regional terrorism, an outcome of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- (b) a plan of action for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific Region, an outcome of the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum
- (c) an agenda for women's empowerment, an outcome of a World Conference convened by the United Nations
- (d) a strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, a declaration of the East Asia Summit

Ans: (c)

Q. The Security Council of UN consists of 5 permanent members, and the remaining 10 members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of (2009)

- (a) 1 year
- (b) 2 years
- (c) 3 years
- (d) 5 years

Ans: (b)

Q. The 'Common Carbon Metric', supported by UNEP, has been developed for

- (a) assessing the carbon footprint of building operations around the world

- (b) enabling commercial banking entities around the world to enter carbon emission trading
- (c) enabling governments to assess the overall carbon footprint caused by their countries
- (d) assessing the overall carbon foot-print caused by the use of fossil fuels by the world in a unit time

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it. (2017)

Q. Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference? (2021)

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