

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR SERVING ON A PEACEKEEPING MISSION AS A UN MILITARY OBSERVER



COURSE AUTHOR

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Norwegian Army (Rtd)

SERIES EDITOR

Harvey J. Langholtz, Ph.D.



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Cover Photo: UN Photo #556888 by Sylvain Liechti. Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz (right), Force Commander of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), during an observation mission with Military Observers on Munigi Hill, as the DR Congo Armed Forces (FARDC) conduct an attack on M23 rebel positions in Kanyaruchinya, near Goma. 15 July 2013.

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Foreword

It is said that United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) are “the eyes and the ears of the Mission”. Their ground-level reporting, observation, and expertise help preserve the integrity of each United Nations mandate and the relations between peacekeepers and the public they are meant to serve. However, UNMOs are just one category of UN Military Experts on Mission (UNMEM). In addition, UNMEM also include UN Military Liaison Officers (MLOs) and UN Military Advisers (MILADs). This course will serve primarily as an introduction to UN Military Observers. The functions of UNMLOs and UNMILADs are briefly introduced.

The military component of a UN peacekeeping operation may consist of national military contingents and/or UNMEM. If a military component is comprised of UNMOs only, consequently, it may be viewed as a UN Military Observer mission.

Beginning with a strategic-level overview of the United Nations organization and principles, this course moves through the operational spectrum of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and ends at the tactical level of “on the ground” knowledge and skills required for an individual UNMEM to succeed. In order to prepare individuals and improve their efficiency and readiness, this course will assist in training UN Military Experts on Mission by enhancing the general understanding of peacekeeping and by providing specific knowledge of methods and techniques for serving on a United Nations mission in the function of UN Military Observer.

Established in 1948 in the region comprising Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Israel, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was the first peacekeeping operation operated by the United Nations. Since that time, 68 missions, including 16 that are active as of 2014, have been established. Throughout these missions, UNMOs from many Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) have served carrying the Blue Beret. Over the last years, the complexity of UN peacekeeping operations have put more intensive and extensive demands on UNMOs. The UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) in 2012 was an example of a very demanding UN Military Observer Mission. I expect this POTI Course to further enhance the motivation and performance of UNMOs during their preparations and in the field.

Egil Nordli
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Norwegian Army



To view a video introduction of this course by the course author LTC Egil Nordli, you can either log in to your virtual classroom, go to <www.peaceopstraining.org/videos/360/unmo-course-introduction/>, or use your mobile device to scan the QR code to the left.



Method of Study

The following are suggestions for how to proceed with this course. Though the student may have alternate approaches that are effective, the following hints have worked for many.

- Before you begin actual studies, first browse through the overall course material. Notice the lesson outlines, which give you an idea of what will be involved as you proceed.
- The material should be logical and straightforward. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.
- Set up guidelines regarding how you want to schedule your time.
- Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If you are able to, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.
- When you finish a lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. For any error, go back to the lesson section and re-read it. Before you go on, be aware of the discrepancy in your understanding that led to the error.
- After you complete all of the lessons, take time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, while the material is fresh in your mind, take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.
- Your exam will be scored, and if you achieve a passing grade of 75 per cent or higher, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 per cent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.
- One note about spelling is in order. This course was written in English as it is used in the United Kingdom.

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LESSON 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE UN
SYSTEM

LESSON 1



LESSON OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Background History of the UN
- 1.2 The Purpose and Principles of the UN
- 1.3 The Six Principal Organs of the UN
- 1.4 Roles and Function of the Secretary-General
- 1.5 Key UN Programmes, Agencies, and Commissions

The aim of this lesson is to provide UN Military Observers (UNMOs) with basic working knowledge of the UN structure, principles, and general functions of the different organs. By the end of Lesson 1, the student should be able to meet the following objectives:

- Outline the background history of the United Nations;
- List the purposes and principles of the UN;
- List the ideals of the people that created the UN; and
- List the six principal organs of the UN and their general functions.

Introduction

As stated in the UN Charter, one of the most important purposes of the UN is “to maintain international peace and security and to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats.” Peacekeeping provides the UN with one of the means of achieving international peace and security. It has developed as a pragmatic response to problems requiring the UN’s actions.

1.1 Background History of the UN

The forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations, an organization conceived in similar circumstances during the First World War and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security. The International Labour Organization was also created under the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League. The League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War.

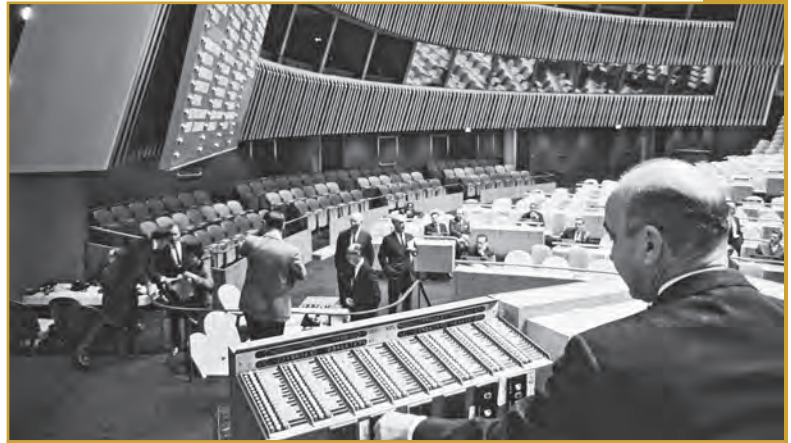
The name “United Nations”, coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was first used in the “Declaration by United Nations” of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War. Representatives of 26 nations pledged their governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers.

After the Second World War, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International Organization to draw up the United Nations Charter. Those delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States from August to October 1944. The representatives of the 50 countries signed the Charter on 26 June 1945. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States.

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and a majority of other signatories had ratified the Charter. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year.

The United Nations Charter

The Charter is a basic document to which nations are signatory. It is also a basic document of the United Nations, setting out the rights and obligations of Member States and establishing the UN organs and procedures. As an international document, the Charter codifies the major principles



The General Assembly at its eighteenth session authorized the Secretary-General to install mechanical voting equipment in the General Assembly Hall on an experimental basis for one year. Checking the electronic system of recording votes is Mr. David B. Vaughan, Under-Secretary of the Office of General Services. (UN Photo #49876 by Yutaka Nagata, 30 November 1964)

of international relations – from the sovereign equality of States to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations. The Preamble to the Charter expresses the ideals and common aims of all peoples whose government joined together to form the United Nations:

“WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed forces shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS. Accordingly, our respective Governments, through the representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organisation to be known as the United Nations.”

1.2 The Purpose and Principles of the UN

The purposes and principles of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, are as follows:

Purposes

- To maintain international peace and security;
- To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples;
- To cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems and in promoting respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms; and
- To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these common ends.

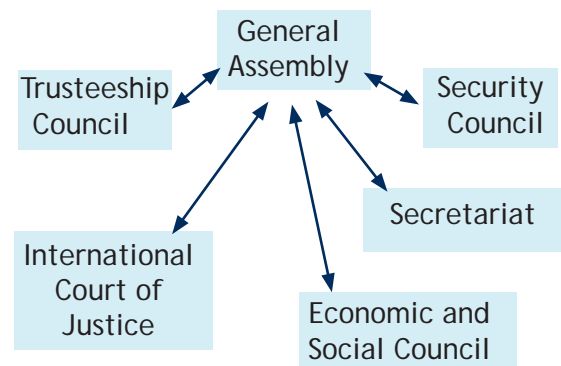
Principles

- The UN is based on the sovereign equality of all its members;
- Members are to fulfil in good faith their charter of obligation;
- They are to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and without endangering international peace, security, and justice;
- They are to refrain from the threat or use of force against any other state;
- They are to give the UN every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the Charter; and
- Nothing in the Charter is to authorize the UN to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

1.3 The Six Principal Organs of the UN

The Charter authorizes the establishment of six principal organs. These organs are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, the Trusteeship Council, and the Secretariat. In addition, there are subsidiary organs, specialized agencies, and other bodies related to the United Nations, which, altogether, form the “United Nations system”.

The Six Principal Organs of the United Nations



The General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative organ of the UN. It is composed of representatives from all Member States, each of which has one vote. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new Members, and budgetary matters require a two-thirds majority. A simple majority is required for decisions on other matters. The General Assembly meets annually in regular sessions. Special sessions can be convened at the request of the Security Council, a majority of Members of the UN, or one Member if the majority of Members concur. An emergency special session may be called within twenty-four hours of a request by the Security Council on the vote of any nine Members of the Council or if a majority of Members concur. Because of the great number of questions that the Assembly is called upon to consider, the Assembly allocates most questions to its six Main Committees:

- First Committee: Disarmament and International Security;
- Second Committee: Economic and Financial;
- Third Committee: Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural;
- Fourth Committee: Special Political and Decolonisation*;
- Fifth Committee*: Administrative and Budgetary; and
- Sixth Committee: Legal.

*These committees have responsibilities relating to UN peacekeeping operations.

Security Council

The Security Council (SC) has the primary responsibility, under the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council has 15 members: five permanent members (5 P) – China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States – and 10 non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each member has one vote. Decisions on substantive matters require nine votes, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. This is the rule of “Great Power unanimity”, often referred to as “veto” power. Under the Charter, all Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council.

When a complaint concerning a threat to peace is brought before it, the Council’s first action is usually to recommend that the parties try to reach an agreement by peaceful means. It may also set principles for a peaceful settlement. When a dispute leads to fighting, the Council’s first concern is to bring it to an end as soon as possible. The Council usually issues ceasefire directives, which prevent wider hostilities. The Council also sends United Nations 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 may also decide on enforcement measures, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes), or collective military action.



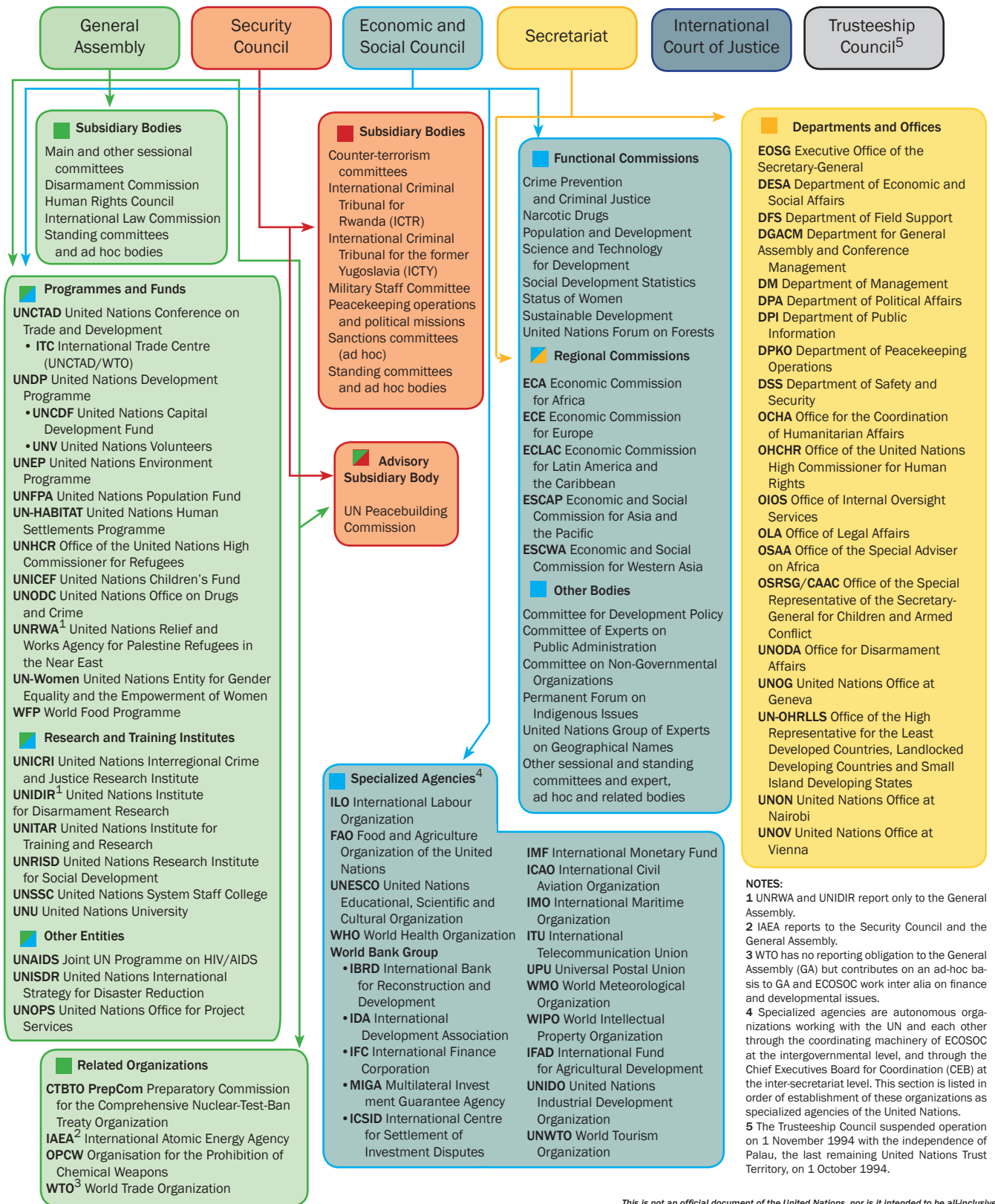
The central art piece in the renovated Security Council Chamber depicts a phoenix rising from its ashes, as a symbol of the world rebuilding itself after the Second World War. The art and the renovations of the room are a gift from Norway. (UN Photo #546339 by JC McIlwaine, 27 March 2013)

Under the Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
- To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
- To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
- To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
- To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
- To take military action against an aggressor;

The United Nations System

Principle Organs



This is not an official document of the United Nations, nor is it intended to be all-inclusive.

- To recommend the admission of new Members;
- To exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in “strategic areas”; and
- To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Economic and Social Council

The Charter established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as the principal organ to coordinate the economic, social, and related work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and institutions known as the United Nations family of organizations. Some of the functions and powers of the Economic and Social Council 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; and
- To promote respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom.

Today, the ECOSOC includes 54 members with one vote each. Of these 54 members, 18 members are elected each year and serve for a three-year term. The Council meets in an annual five-week session alternating between New York and Geneva. The Council is not a decision-making body. Members of ECOSOC prepare items for the GA’s decisions and assist the Security Council when so required.

International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It settles legal disputes between states and gives advisory opinions to the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Its Statute is an integral part of the United Nations Charter.

The Court is open to all states that are parties to its Statute. These include all Members of the United Nations and Switzerland. Only states may be parties in contentious cases and submit disputes to the Court. The Court is not open to private persons and entities or international organizations.

The General Assembly and the Security Council can ask the Court for an advisory opinion on any legal question. Other organs of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, when authorized by the Assembly, can ask for advisory opinions on legal questions within the scope of their activities.

The Trusteeship Council

The Charter established the Trusteeship Council in 1945 to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories placed under the administration of seven Member States, and to ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government or independence. The Charter authorized the Trusteeship Council to examine and discuss reports from the Administering Authority on the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples of Trust Territories; to examine petitions from the Territories; and to undertake special missions to the Territories.

By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence, either as separate states or by joining neighbouring independent countries. The last to do so was the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Palau), which became the 185th Member State. Its work completed, the Trusteeship Council – consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council – has amended its rules of procedure to meet as and where occasion may require.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat is the administrative organ of Member States and is staffed by international servants. It works in duty stations around the world and carries out the diverse day-to-day work of the organization. It services the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programmes and policies laid down by them. At its head is the Secretary-General, who is appointed by



[Former] Secretary-General Kofi Annan (right) meets Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon [while he was Secretary-General-designate] at UN Headquarters. (UN Photo #133018 by Mark Garten, 22 November 2006)

1.4 Roles and Function of the Secretary-General

The Charter describes the Secretary-General as “chief administrative officer” of the organization, who shall act in that capacity and perform “such other functions as are entrusted” to him or her by the Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and other United Nations organs. The Charter also empowers the Secretary-General to “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.” These guidelines both define the powers of the office and grant it considerable scope for action. The Secretary-General would fail if he did not take careful account of the concerns of Member States. In addition, he must uphold the values and moral authority of the United Nations, always speaking and acting for peace, even at risk of challenging or disagreeing with those same Member States.

This creative tension accompanies the Secretary-General through day-to-day work, which includes attendance at sessions of United Nations bodies; consultations with world leaders, government officials and others; and worldwide travel intended to keep him in touch with the peoples of Member States and informed about the vast array of issues of international concern that are on the organization’s agenda. Each year, the Secretary-General issues a report on the work of the organization that appraises its activities and outlines future priorities.

The Secretary-General is best known to the general public for using his stature and impartiality to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating, or spreading. Each Secretary-General also defines his role within the context of his particular time in office.

the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year renewable term.

The duties carried out by the Secretariat are as varied as the problems dealt with by the United Nations. These range from administering peacekeeping operations to mediating international disputes, from surveying economic and social trends and problems to preparing studies on human rights and sustainable development. As international civil servants, staff members and the Secretary-General answer to the United Nations alone for their activities, and they take an oath not to seek or receive instructions from any government or outside authority. Under the Charter, each Member State undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and to refrain from seeking to influence them improperly in the discharge of their duties.

The Secretariat is divided into several major organizational units, each of which is headed by an Under-Secretary-General or an official of an equivalent level.

UN Secretary-General

Mr. Ban Ki-moon of South Korea is the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations. He began his first term in 2007. On 21 June 2011, he was unanimously appointed by the General Assembly for a second five-year term.

Under the Charter, the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council. Mr. Ban's predecessors were as follows:

- Kofi Annan (Ghana), January 1997 - December 2006
- Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt), January 1992 - December 1996
- Javier Perez de Cuellar (Peru), January 1982 - December 1991
- Kurt Waldheim (Austria), January 1972 - December 1981
- U Thant (Myanmar), November 1961 - December 1971
- Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden), April 1953 - September 1961
- Trygve Lie (Norway), February 1946 - November 1952

Mr. Ban's many priorities while serving as Secretary-General include initiatives to address global warming, prevention of and response to pandemics, access to clean water and food for the world's poorest, energy consumption and production, and economic stability. He credits witnessing the United Nations' efforts in post-war South Korea with inspiring him to dedicate himself to public service. He is quoted as saying, "As Secretary-General, I am determined to see this Organization deliver tangible, meaningful results that advance peace, development, and human rights."

1.5 Key UN Programmes, Agencies, and Commissions

Peacekeepers may encounter some of the UN's programmes, agencies or commissions working in connection with or as a part of a peacekeeping operation. The most common ones include:

- UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which is voluntarily financed. It extends international protection to more than 10 million refugees, seeking to ensure that they receive asylum and favourable legal status in their asylum country.¹
- UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund, which is voluntarily financed. It helps developing countries, at their request, to improve the quality of life of their children through low-cost community-based services in maternal and child health, nutrition, sanitation and education, as well as emergency relief.
- UNDP – United Nations Development Programme, the world's largest channel for multi-lateral technical and pre-investment assistance to developing countries. It has supported more than 6,000 ongoing projects in 177 countries.²
- WFP – World Food Programme, the world's largest international food aid organization. It is responsible for handling annually around 3.1 million metric tons of food aid.³ WFP's mandate is to help poor people in developing countries by combating world hunger and poverty.

1 UNHCR, "Refugee Figures." <www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d.html>.

2 UN Development Programme, "Our Projects." <<http://open.undp.org/#2015>>.

3 World Food Programme, "Refugee Figures." <<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp265227.pdf>>.

End-of-Lesson Quiz

1. The purpose of the UN is to promote:

- A. International security alliances and weapons sharing among nations;
- B. Cooperation in solving international problems and a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations;
- C. Annual competitions among states;
- D. All of the above.

2. The Secretary-General:

- A. Is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations;
- B. Brings any matter which threatens international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council;
- C. Is impartial;
- D. All of the above.

3. Select the statement that describes the General Assembly.

- A. It is the main deliberate organ of the UN for all Member States;
- B. It consists of countries with GNPs higher than \$2B to vote;
- C. It consists of countries that each have two votes;
- D. None of the above.

4. The Security Council has the primary responsibility, under the Charter, to:

- A. Maintain international peace and security;
- B. Serve as the central forum for the discussion of international economic and social issues;
- C. Monitor the World Health Organization;
- D. Create laws for Member nations.

5. List and briefly discuss the six principal organs of the UN.

6. The principal judicial organ of the UN is the:

- A. General Assembly;
- B. Congress of the UN;
- C. International Court of Justice;
- D. Supreme Court of the Hague.

7. The International Court of Justice (ICJ):

- A. Provides international supervision for 11 Trust Territories;
- B. Provides advisory opinions on legal questions to the other UN organs;
- C. Is the administrative organ of Member States;
- D. Is the principal organ to coordinate the economic, social, and related work of the UN.

8. Give a brief description of the UNHCR.

9. Give a brief description of UNICEF.

10. Give a brief description of the UNDP.

ANSWER KEY

1B, 2D, 3A, 4A,

5. Trusteeship Council; General Assembly; Security Council; International Court of Justice; Economic and Social Council; Secretariat,

6C, 7B,

8. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, voluntarily financed extends international protection to more than 10 million refugees, seeking to ensure that they receive asylum and favourable legal status in their asylum country,

9. UN Children's Fund, voluntarily financed, helps developing countries, at their request, to improve the quality of the life of their children through low cost community based services in maternal and child health, nutrition, sanitation and education, as well as emergency relief,

10. UN Development Programme, the world's largest channel for multi-lateral technical and pre-investment assistance to developing countries, is supporting over 6,000 projects in some 170 countries.

