

# Main Organs

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The main organs of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat. All were established in 1945 when the UN was founded.



**UN Photo/Amanda Voisard**

The UN General Assembly Hall during a vote in November 2014 to elect four judges to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation. Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and **general debate**, which many heads of state attend and address. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. The General Assembly, each year, elects a **GA President** to serve a one-year term of office.

## Security Council

The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members (5 permanent and

10 non-permanent members). Each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a **Presidency**, which rotates, and changes, every month.

- Daily programme of work of the Security Council
- Subsidiary organs of the Security Council

### **Economic and Social Council**

The Economic and Social Council is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals. It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies. It has **54 Members**, elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development.

### **Trusteeship Council**

The Trusteeship Council was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under Chapter XIII, to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence. By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence. The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994. By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994, the Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required -- by its decision or the decision of its President, or at the request of a majority of its members or the General Assembly or the Security Council.

### **International Court of Justice**

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands). It is the only one of the six principal organs of the United Nations not located in New York (United States of America). The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal

disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

## **Secretariat**

The Secretariat comprises the **Secretary-General** and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs. The Secretary-General is **chief administrative officer** of the Organization, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term. UN staff members are recruited internationally and locally, and work in duty stations and on peacekeeping missions all around the world. But serving the cause of peace in a violent world is a dangerous occupation. Since the founding of the United Nations, hundreds of brave men and women have given their lives in its service.