



The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights. It is currently made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 193 Member States to express their views, through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees.

History of the UN



The idea of the United Nations was born during World War II (1939-1945). World leaders who had collaborated to end the war felt a strong need for a mechanism that would help bring peace and stop future wars. They realized that this was possible only if all nations worked together through a global organization. The United Nations was to be that Organization. The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945 with 51 Member States.



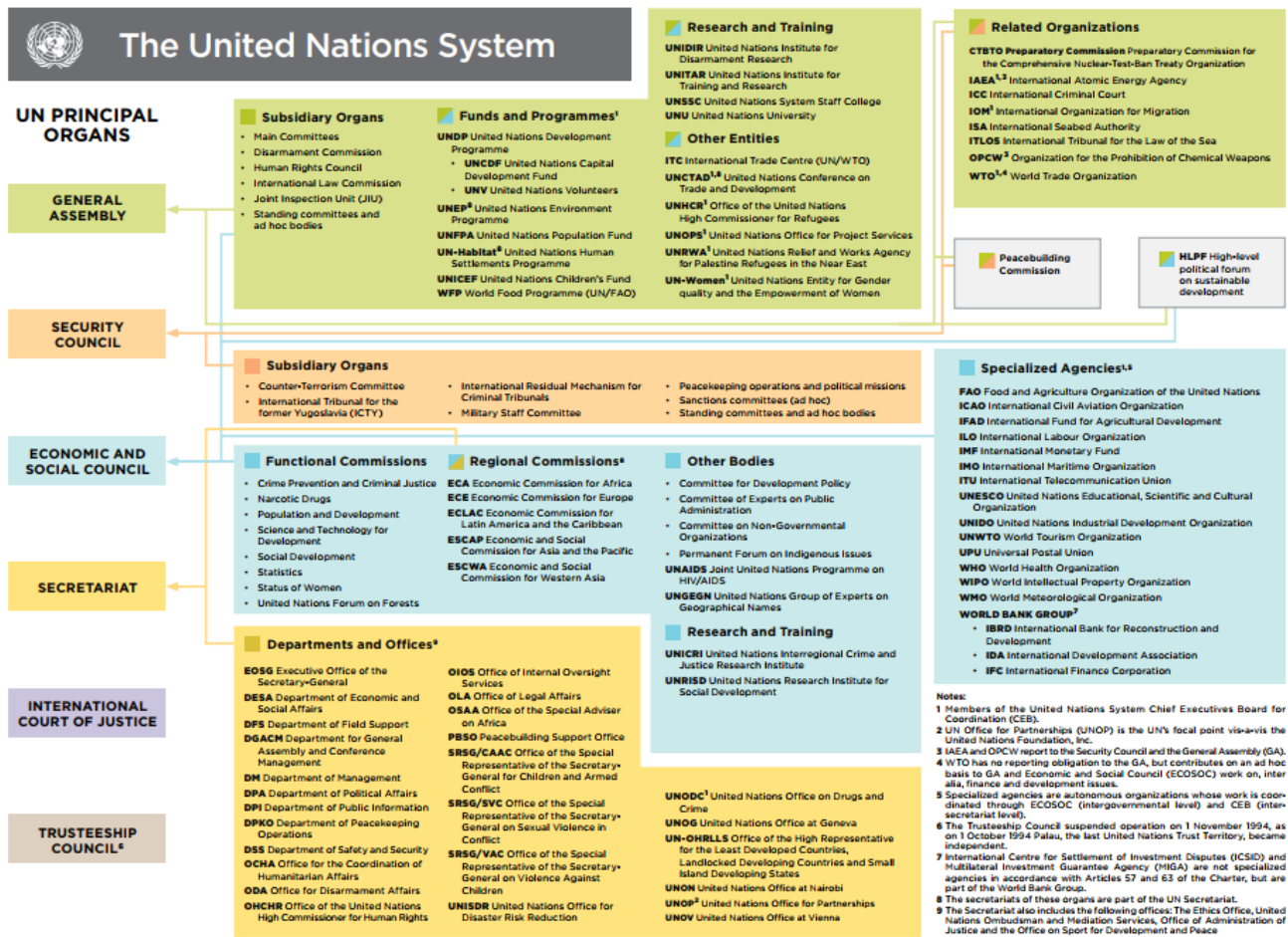
We usually think of international organizations as a twentieth-century phenomenon that started with the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919. This is, for the most part, true. However, in the late nineteenth century nations had already established international organizations for dealing with specific issues. The foremost among them were *the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, founded in 1865 (originally called the International Telegraph Union), and *the Universal Postal Union*, which dates back to 1874. Today, both of these organizations are part of the UN system.



The 193 Members of the United Nations pay for everything that the Organization does. It has no other source of income. Payments to the UN for all types of **budgets** are compulsory. Members pay according to a scale of assessments agreed upon by all. This scale is based on a country's ability to pay, national income and population.



The United Nations System



The work of the United Nations is carried out almost all over the world and is done by **six main organs**:

- ✓ General Assembly
- ✓ Security Council
- ✓ Economic and Social Council
- ✓ Trusteeship Council
- ✓ International Court of Justice
- ✓ Secretariat

All these organs are based at UN Headquarters in New York, except for the International Court of Justice, which is located at the Hague, Netherlands. Related to the United Nations are *specialized agencies* that coordinate their work with the UN but are separate, autonomous organizations. They work in areas as diverse as health, agriculture, telecommunications and weather. In addition, there are *programmes, funds and other bodies* with responsibilities in specific fields. These bodies, together with the UN proper and its specialized programmes, compose *the United Nations system*.