

THE UNITED NATIONS

32.1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations is a unique institution of our times. It is universal in membership. Its members have increased from the original 51 in 1945 to 191 now. Most of the countries in the world today are member states of the United Nations. The activities of the United Nations reflect the needs and hopes of not just the governments but the people of the world at large. The United Nations is, therefore, a world organization. Its wide-ranging functions include maintaining peace among nations, improving living standards within the member countries, protection human rights and promoting respect for international law, etc. Without exaggerating, there is not a single aspect of our life that is not touched by the ver-increasing scope of the United Nations' activities. However, critics blame the United Nations for failing to perform effectively on many occasions. The answer lies not in discarding, but enhancing the capabilities of the organization.

32.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- trace the origins of the United Nations,
- identify its objectives and basic principles;
- identify its principal organs, their composition and functions;
- analyse its role in bringing about world peace and security;
- enumerate its contribution to the cause of economic development of the third world countries and protection of human rights.
- assess the significant results of its opposition to colonialism and racial discrimination;
- conclude that the United Nations is the only hope for future generations.

32.3 ORIGINS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Historically, wars have played a major role in the relationship among countries. The wars that occurred in the past two centuries involved more and more countries; and they proved to be increasingly destructive. The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed two

world wars. Horrified by the widespread loss of life and property during the First World War (1914-19) the victorious nations established the League of Nations to prevent another world war. But, unfortunately, the member nations of the League soon got divided and they fought the Second World War during the 1939-45.

The Second World War was much more destructive than the First World War. It is estimated that 60 million lives were lost in the war. Even before the complete defeat of the enemy countries (viz. Germany Japan, and Italy), the Allied countries led by the USA the Soviet Union, and the UK started planning a new organization to succeed the League of Nations. The US President, Franklin Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill signed the Atlantic Charter in August 1941 indicating their desire for a post-war peace institution. Then a series of conferences followed at Moscow, Teheran, Dumbarton Oaks and Yalta to discuss various ideas and proposals. Finally, the United States hosted the San Francisco Conference in early 1945 to finalise and sign the Charter of the new organization, the "United Nations". The United Nations, with 51 States as its original members, came into being on 24 October 1945.

The Charter is the constitution of the United Nations. It lists the purposes of the organization, the principles guiding the conduct of both the United Nations and its member countries, the principal organs along with their composition and powers. Therefore, the Charter provides a valuable introduction to the United Nations.

Purposes and Principles

The Charter indicates at the very beginning four broad objectives of the United Nations. They are :

- (i) to maintain international peace and security through collective measures for suppression of aggression and through peaceful settlement of disputes;
- (ii) to develop friendly relations among countries based on full respect for the principle of equality and self-determination;
- (iii) to achieve international cooperation in solving interstate problems in the economic, social, cultural or humanitarian fields; and
- (iv) to encourage respect for human rights without any discrimination.

In pursuit of the above objectives, both the United Nations and its member States are required to adhere to a set of important guiding principles. The foremost among them is the principle of sovereign equality. The United Nations will treat all members as sovereign equals without discriminating between big and small, or rich and poor members. Also, the United Nations will not interfere in the domestic matters of the member countries, and as such the domestic matters are not required to be taken to the United Nations.

The member states of the United Nations are expected to resolve their disputes with other states in a peacefully manner without endangering international peace and security. Further, the member States should refrain from threats or use of force against another member. It is the duty of the members to assist only the United Nations and not the States against whom the UN may take action.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.1

Fill in the blanks:

1. The United Nations Charter was signed in 1945 at the city of _____
(Geneva, New York, San Francisco)

2. _____ countries were the original members of the United Nations (26, 51, 191)
3. The main purpose of the United Nation's Charter is _____.
4. Sovereign equality among the member states is a cardinal principle of the United Nations.
(True/False)
5. The United Nations cannot normally take up domestic problems of its member countries.
(True/False)

32.4 PRINCIPAL ORGANS – COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS

To promote the goals of peace and cooperation, the United Nations has six principal organs. They are:

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

Although these principal organs are inter-linked in many ways, each one of them is distinct in terms of its composition and powers. Let us examine them one by one.

(a) General Assembly

Among the principal organs, the General Assembly is the central body. The principles of sovereign equality and universality are embodied in the Assembly. All members of the United Nations (presently 191) are members of the General Assembly. Irrespective of size or strength, every member has one vote in the Assembly. A vote cast by the United States, for example, is equivalent to the vote of Bhutan or Cuba. The Assembly takes decisions on important matters like recommendations on peace and security questions, admission of new members and adoption of the UN budget by two-thirds majority. Procedural decisions require only a simple majority.

The Assembly meets in regular session every year. It has convened 51 such sessions so far. The Assembly can also meet, if the need arises, in special sessions and emergency special sessions.

The Assembly exercise a variety of powers and functions. First, it can discuss any matter within the scope of the Charter. As the scope of the Charter is vast, the Assembly's power to discuss matters includes peace and security questions, environment protection, economic development, problems of colonial administration, disarmament, refugees, population explosion, use of global commons like outer space and deep seaboard it cannot only discuss matters, but also make recommendations. However, it cannot make recommendations on a peace and security question which comes within the purview of the Security Council. As part of this function, the Assembly has adopted a number of important declarations containing principles of international cooperation in political, economic, social and other matters. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948). The Declaration on Decolonisation (1960). Declaration on New International Economic Order (1974), are only a few examples. They are not binding on countries. Yet they carry great moral and political weight, which can not be ignored.

In the area of the codification of international law, the Assembly adopted several conventions touching upon human rights, arms control and diplomatic relations. These

conventions are legally binding on those states who become party to them. The Assembly, also elects members to various organs. It appoints the Secretary General. It supervises the work of the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and other bodies. The Assembly has the power to approve the budget of the United Nations and to fix the amount.

(b) The Security Council

The Security Council is the powerful arm of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. The Council is a contrast from the General Assembly in respect of both its composition and the decision-making procedure. Unlike the Assembly, the membership of the Council is limited to 15 countries only, out of which five are permanent members. These five – the USA, China, France, Russia, and the UK – were selected in 1945 based on some historical and political reasons. The remaining ten members – called non-permanent members – are elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years. The latter ten come from different geographical regions of the world like Asia, Africa, Latin America, Western and Eastern Europe. It was initially hoped that its small size could make it easy for the Council to take decisions on procedural matters by nine affirmative votes (simple majority). On substantive questions, the nine affirmative votes should include concurring vote of the permanent members. In other words, the Council cannot take decisions of major significance if any one of the five permanent members casts a negative vote. This special privilege of the permanent members is popularly known as the "veto power". To abstain from voting in the Security Council is not veto. The veto provision has faced criticism from the very beginning. The veto power dilutes the principle of sovereign equality of member countries, because with veto power the permanent members have become more sovereign than the rest of the members.

The power and functions of the Security Council are limited to the task of maintenance of international peace and security. In case a dispute arises between two or more countries, the Council can make appropriate recommendations in the interest of peaceful settlement of that dispute. Nevertheless, these recommendations are not binding on the unwilling states. For example, on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, the Security Council resolutions are not legally binding on either India or Pakistan unless both countries willingly accept them. The Council can use extraordinary powers to deal with wars or threats of war between countries. In such an event, the Council can determine who the aggressor is and can call for necessary steps to restore peace. These steps may include, at the discretion of the Council, economic sanctions like freezing of assets abroad, banning of exports and imports, or military action by land, sea or air. Notably, whenever the Security Council exercises these extraordinary powers in the wake of wars, those decisions are binding not only on the states directly involved in the war but also on all members of the United Nations. Once the Security Council takes a decision, it is the duty of the member states to carry out the decision. Obviously, the Council can take such important decisions only with the agreement among the permanent members. In the recent years, after the end of the cold war, the Council has frequently invoked its binding powers to deal with various problems of international peace and security. We will discuss some examples later in this lesson.

(c) The Economic and Social Council

The functional concern of the Economic and Social Council is indicated in the organ's name itself. It discusses international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. The Council is empowered to set up Commissions to study and advise on various problem areas like the status of women, population, human rights, etc. It has the power to coordinate the activities of various specialized agencies like the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, (which are discussed in a separate lesson in this book) so as to minimise

duplication of their activities. Another important function of the Council is to bring non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take part in its deliberations. Nevertheless, the powers of the Council are quite modest as compared to its responsibilities. By means of study, discussion and coordination, the Council is expected to promote full employment, higher standards of living and solution of international economic and social problems. The Council usually meets once a year. It comprises 54 members, all of whom are elected for a three-year term by the General Assembly, giving wide representation to various geographical regions. Decisions are taken by a simple majority of members present and voting in the Council.

(d) The Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council is the principal organ created to supervise the administration of territories placed under the international trusteeship system. The Trusteeship Council administered 11 territories – originally placed under the trusteeship system – indirectly through the designated administering powers. All the trust territories have now been out of the trusteeship system, as they have freely exercised their right to self-determination. They have chosen either to become independent or merge with a neighbouring territory. The composition of the Council was originally devised in a special manner: all countries administering trust territories in the UN and the permanent members of the Security Council that were not administering members in the Council. Just like the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council could take decisions by a simple majority. Now that there is no trust territory to be administered, the Trusteeship Council has ceased to play an important role in the UN system does not hold meetings. The Charter has to be amended to dissolve this organ.

International trusteeship system was created for administration & supervision of such territories which had not attained independence till the end of even the Second World War.

(e) The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice, located at Hague (the Netherlands), is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The Court – known as the World Court – consists of 15 judges known as members are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council for a term of nine years. Only states, not private individuals, can bring cases before the Court. Also, the Court renders advisory opinions on the request of the Security Council or the General Assembly. So far, the Court has handled 72 cases and has rendered 23 advisory opinions on matters of legal importance. It has delivered judgments on such important issues as territorial rights, law of the sea and interpretation of international treaties.

(f) The Secretariat

The Secretariat as the principal organ headed by Secretary General serves the needs of various organs as well as representatives of the member countries. Numbering nearly 50,000, the international staff of the Secretariat is posted at the UN headquarters, New York and several other locations throughout the world. While only persons of competence and integrity are required, the recruitment in the Secretariat ensures representation to every member nation. They are expected to be impartial and independent in the discharge of their responsibilities. The staff is accountable only to the United Nations and not any particular member country. The Secretary General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a term of five years. Since the inception of the Organization, six persons have served as the Secretary-General. They are : Trygve

Lie of Norway (1946-52), Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden (1953-61), U Thant of Myanmar (1961-71), Kurt Waldheim of Austria (1972-81), Javier Perez de Cuellar of Peru (1982-91) and Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt (1992-96). Presently, Kofi Annan from Ghana is occupying this prestigious office.

The powers and functions of the Secretary-General call for diplomatic experience, ability to take initiatives and exercise of political judgement. A very important power entrusted to the Secretary-General in the Charter is the power to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his assessment could threaten international peace and security. The Secretary General often attempts to bring quarreling countries to the negotiating table. He acts as a mediator with or without the prior authorisation from the Security Council or the General Assembly. In essence, the Secretary-General is widely looked upon as a source of valuable advice to the member governments. He is also a voice of moderation and statesmanship in the troubled waters of world politics.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.2

Answer the following questions:

1. The General Assembly adopts the budget of the United Nations. (True/False)
2. The permanent members have veto in _____ (all organs of the United Nations/the Security Council).
3. How many territories did The Trusteeship Council used to administer? (5/11/15)
4. Which organ of the United Nations performs the function of coordinating the activities of the specialized agencies ?
General Assembly / Security Council / Economic and Social Council
5. Private individuals can bring disputes before the World Court. (True/False)
6. _____ is the United Nations' Secretary General.
(Boutros Boutros-Ghali/Kofi Annan)
7. The judges of the World Court are elected by _____ (General Assembly/Security Council/Both Security Council and General Assembly)

32.5 ROLE IN SECURING WORLD PEACE

As we have already noted, the maintenance of international peace and security is a very important purpose of the United Nations. Other purposes are complementary to the purpose of peace. To achieve this all important objective, the United Nations' bodies, especially the Security Council, have been endowed with a variety of powers and responsibilities. In discussing the role of the United Nations in preserving world peace, we should bear in mind one basic aspect of the world body: it is a political body serving its member governments in the context of global politics. Neither the preferences of governments nor the trends in international politics are static: they change from time to time. Hence, in the exercise of its powers, the United Nations cannot be rigid, mechanical or uniform. The role of the United Nations is marked, therefore, by flexibility and pragmatism. Generally, the UN preferred not to name or condemn the aggressor country whenever it received complaints on a breach of peace. Instead, it directed its efforts to stop the fighting immediately and to seek withdrawal of troops to pre-war locations.

The dangers to international peace and security have appeared in different forms : armed

clashes over disputed borders, military intervention by one country to change unfriendly governments in another, covert support from outside to power struggles within a country, cold war rivalries between the United States and the Soviet camps showing up in regional conflicts, and so on. In responding to many of these threats, the United Nations has pursued broadly three lines of action. They are - firstly the efforts of diplomatic and peaceful character, secondly the use of sanctions and military force, and lastly the deployment of military personnel for restoration of peace without the use of force. We shall briefly examine each of them here.

The role of the United Nations in finding peaceful solutions through diplomatic means to problems among member countries is a quiet process which does not often attract publicity. According to official information, the United Nations has found peaceful solution to nearly 172 disputes and conflicts during the last 50 years. It has encouraged and negotiated settlement by mediating between the countries directly concerned. The technique of mediation requires a good deal of patience on the part of the disputant States as well as the mediator. It may not yield results in a short time-frame. Mediation is attempted at the request of the state parties, the Security Council, the General Assembly or by the Secretary-General on his own initiative. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 (during the cold war period) is a good example where the Secretary General U Thant's mediation helped to avoid direct military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Often, senior and experienced diplomats and statesmen are drafted to serve as mediators. Currently, two dozen mediators are working for the United Nations in different troubled areas. In recent years the United Nations mediation led to the peace accords in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador and Guatemala. The United Nations also undertakes fact-finding or investigation missions for the purpose of verifying facts. To cite an instance, the United Nations investigated in the 1980s the accusations about the use of banned chemical weapons against civilian population in the Iraq-Iran War.

The second aspect of the United Nations' role relates to enforcement action aimed at reversing threats to peace and aggressions. As we have already learnt in this lesson, the Security Council is endowed with the powers to punish, through economic and military measures, those countries that endanger international peace and refuse to heed to its decisions. Not that the Council would initiate action to repel all aggressions: its role would depend on the specific circumstances of each case and the existence of broad agreement among the five permanent members. It is important to note that the Security Council has imposed varying sets of economic and diplomatic sanctions against ten countries so far. These sanctions included cutting off diplomatic relations, stopping of oil imports and exports, banning weapons supplies, freezing of assets abroad, etc. Haiti, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, South Africa were among the targets of these sanctions. In the rare event of these measures not being adequately effective, the Security Council on behalf of the United Nations as a whole may also exercise the option of military action. Since no armed forces are placed under the United Nations to fight an aggressor even after five decades of the Charter's commitment it. It requests member countries to contribute towards such a force to take military action for restoring peace. The United Nations authorized military action to push North Korea back from South Korea in 1950, and Iraq from Kuwait in 1990. In the recent years, after the end of the cold war, the world is faced with brutal civil wars which threatened peace in the surrounding regions. The United Nations response was to authorize, international military action under the leadership of a major power or a regional organization (like NATO). Such actions have been initiated in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haiti and Rwanda. Notably, all of them do not fit into the type of foreign aggressions. The United Nations responded to the new challenges to world peace this way in the absence of better alternatives. However, the military coalitions have not been very effective in restoring stability in troubled situations within member countries.

The third aspect of the United Nations role in the maintenance of world peace refers to the technique of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping means deployment of military and civilian officials for separating the warring parties in a troubled area. The United Nations sends them after obtaining the consent from the countries concerned. The United Nations' peacekeepers discharge their delicate task without showing favour to any warring party and without usually using force. The United Nations has carried so far more than 40 peacekeeping operations in various regions of the world. They are popularly known as the "blue helmets". The United Nations Emergency Force – sent in 1956 to Sinai area in the Middle East to pacify the warring forces of Israel and Egypt – was the first major peace-keeping operation. Then a number of major peace-keeping operations followed, as, for example, in Congo, Cyprus, again in the Middle East, Lebanon, etc. They brought calm to a conflict zone so that negotiations could proceed for resolving the underlying problems. The post-cold war years have witnessed a more frequent deployment of large peace-keeping forces. Many of them were huge in size and ambitious in aims. And they have dealt with problems that lie within the borders of a state, rather than between states. Some of the relevant examples refer to Cambodia, Georgia, Mozambique, Somalia, etc. The mission in the States of former Yugoslavia – known as the UN Protection Force – is the largest such operation ever launched by the United Nations in its history. This and the Somalia mission have many lessons to offer to the future peace-keeping activity.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.3

Answers the following questions:

1. In peace and security matters, the United Nations' approach is guided more by flexibility than rigid application of the Charter provisions. (True/False)
2. _____ and _____ are notable aspects of the United Nations' role to find peaceful settlement of the problems between states.
3. The recommendations of the United Nations towards peaceful solution of international disputes are binding on the countries concerned. (True/False)
4. Identify some of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council.
.....
.....
5. _____ and _____ are two major instances of Security Council authorization for use of military force.
6. _____ was the first major peace-keeping operation to be launched by the United Nations in 1956

32.6 EFFORTS TOWARDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Although war and peace questions bring the United Nations into the media headlines, the United Nations has pursued international economic and social cooperation with dedication. Nearly 80 per cent of the United Nations' financial and human resources is directed towards promoting economic and social development of poor countries. All its efforts are directed to the benefit of a large section of developing countries collectively known as the Third World. It is here that three-fourths of the world population live in hunger, disease, poverty, illiteracy and indebtedness. The fact that the gap in the living conditions between the less developed and the developed countries is ever increasing was a matter of great concern to the United Nations right from the early days.

The role of the United Nations has been two-fold : first, to collect information and promote greater awareness about economic and social conditions among various (particularly less developed) member countries, and secondly, build up a consensus on the plans/programmes of action aimed at economic advancement. The United Nations' General Assembly designated each decade commencing from 1960 as the "Development Decade" and formulated strategies containing targets to be met in specific areas of action by member governments. Targets were recommended for the growth of gross national product, agricultural production, industrial production, increasing development assistance by UN to backward countries, and so on. Unfortunately many of these targets had not been met owing to lack of interest among the developed countries. On sustained demand of less developed countries the General Assembly gave a call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974. The New Order was to be based on the principles of fairness and justice to the developing countries. No progress could be made on this idea either. The industrialised North and the less developed South disagreed on the role of the United Nations in the regulation of world economic relations. The rich countries were opposed to an active role for the United Nations because they feared the numerical strength of the Third World in this body. They preferred institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which lie outside the purview of the United Nations and are controlled by the rich and advanced nations.

The end of the cold war did not make much difference to the economic woes of the Third World countries. Their external debt has reached 2,000 billion dollars. Besides, the former socialist countries are competing for assistance which was meant originally for the developing countries. In the 1990s, the United Nations is highlighting the point that development is in crisis. It is underlining the linkages of various global issues like environment, population and human rights with development. The United Nations' global conferences – starting from the 1992 Earth Summit to the Social Summit at Copenhagen (1995) and the Beijing Women's Conference (1995) – formulated action plans to address urgent issues in development.

Besides, the United Nations provides assistance of various kinds. Technical assistance and humanitarian assistance are the major forms of the United Nations' help to the needy countries. They relate to making the experts available for evaluating the feasibility of development projects, supply of equipment, training programmes, disbursement of food, clothing etc. According to the latest figures, the United Nations provides development assistance to the tune of 3,500 million dollars a year. The UN Development Programme is an important development arm of the United Nations. The UN Children's Fund and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees also render yeoman service on behalf of the United Nations. More needs to be done, but it will be possible only with the cooperation of the rich advanced member nations from Europe and North America.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.4

Answers the following questions:

1. _____ per cent of the United Nations' resources goes towards development activities. (50/70/80)
2. The main arm of the United Nations for giving technical assistance is the _____. (UN Development Programme/World Bank/Economic and Social Council)
3. The demand for a New International Economic Order was principally made by _____. (the socialist/the less developed/advanced countries)
4. The main role of the United Nations in the area of economic development is _____.

(to give loans/to promote awareness and build consensus/to transfer funds from rich to poor countries)

5. The first 'Development Decade' was designated in the _____
(1950s/1960s/1990s)
 6. The UN Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992 is widely known as the _____. (Earth Summit/Development Summit/Environment Summit)
 7. Which institutions did the rich and advanced countries favour, instead of the United Nations, for channelling economic assistance? (NATO/World Bank/European Union)
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32.7 FIGHT AGAINST COLONIALISM AND RACISM

Freeing subject populations from colonial rule is an historic achievement of the United Nations. When the United Nations came into existence, 11 territories (called "Trust" Territories by the Charter) were placed under the responsibility of the United Nations until the peoples of the territories concerned would be able to determine freely their future status. Camerouns, Nauru, New Guinea, the Pacific Islands, Ruanda-Urundi, Somalialand, Tanganyika, Togoland were among them. Now no trust territory exists, thanks to the tireless support provided by the United Nations. Of the 11 territories, seven have become independent and four chose to merge with the neighbouring countries. The United Nations interest in the liberation of subject peoples extended beyond trust territories. It built up sustained pressure for granting of independence to colonial territories. The high point in this campaign against colonialism was the adoption of the Declaration on Decolonisation by the General Assembly in 1960 demanding immediate independence of all colonial territories and populations. Since that time, 60 territories have been decolonised under the sustained pressure from the anti-colonial group in the United Nations. As of now, only 17 small territories remain on the list of colonial territories which the United Nations has pledged to decolonise by the turn of the twentieth century.

The United Nations' opposition to racism in South Africa – known as apartheid – is also remarkable. The Organization's interest in the matter dates back to early 1946. South African White minority regime did not pay heed to the gentle pleas by the United Nations' against apartheid. As such, the General Assembly launched several steps like exclusion of South African teams in international sports events, and denial of its right to participate in its consecutive sessions. The Security Council joined the efforts later by banning arms sales to South Africa. Partly owing to this isolation and partly orphaned after the easing of the cold war tensions, South Africa agreed to take necessary steps for the dismantling of the apartheid system. The widely respected black leader, Nelson Mandela was released after 27 years of imprisonment. The apartheid laws were revoked. Internationally supervised free elections were held, leading to the installation of a government under President Mandela in May 1994. Soon afterwards, the United Nations revoked all previous punishments and restored to the new South Africa its rightful place in the world body.

32.8 PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Charter encourages the United Nations' bodies to take multi-pronged action for the world-wide respect for, and observance of, human rights. In this respect, the Commission on Human Rights, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly have taken keen interest. Nearly 80 declarations and conventions touching upon various facets of human rights have been adopted by the United Nations in the past five decades.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the first among the UN declarations. The day of its adoption – 10 December, 1948 is celebrated every year as the Human Rights

in the use of radio and the satellite for educational purposes, as well as promoting international treaties aimed at furthering this free flow. In 1978 it adopted an important goal regarding "New International Information and Communication Order". This decision has become very controversial as a result of criticisms from Western countries, as they do not want to give away their monopoly in this field.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 33.1

Fill in the blanks with the words given in brackets.

1. _____ is one of the Specialised Agencies of the UN which was established 25 years before the creation of the UN. (UNESCO/FAO/ILO/WHO)
2. Which one among the Specialised Agencies got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969? _____ (ILO/UNESCO/WHO/FAO)
3. Promotion of Social Justice for the working class is the objective of _____. (FAO/WHO/UNESCO/ILO)
4. In which year did UNESCO call for "New International Information and Communication Order"? (1945/1975/1978/1993)

33.5 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

The Geneva-based WHO came into existence in 1948. It is one of the Specialised Agencies of the UN. Its objective as stated in Article 1 of Constitution, is "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health". Its Constitution defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

Its Constitution directs it to assist governments to strengthen their health services to stimulate and advance work to eradicate disease, to promote maternal and child health, mental health, medical research and the prevention of accidents; to improve standards of teaching and training in the health professions, and of nutrition, housing, sanitation, working conditions and other aspects of environment health. The Organization is also empowered to propose conventions, agreements and regulations about international health matters; to revise names of diseases; causes of death and public health practices; to develop, establish and promote international standards concerning foods, biological, pharmaceutical and similar substances.

The emphasis of WHO's work has gradually evolved from disease control to health promotion. In 1977 on the approval of World Health Assembly, its principal body, WHO has set "Health for All by the year 2000", as a priority of its objectives. A global strategy has been worked out to reach this goal. The strategy is based on the primary health care approach. To implement this global strategy combined efforts of the governments and people are required.

WHO helps countries reinforce their health system by building up infrastructures, particularly development of human resources for health which includes services for the individual, family and community, health institutions, systems of referring complex problems to more specialised services, and the provision of essential drugs and other supplies and equipment.

A worldwide campaign is being launched by WHO and UNICEF (UN Childrens Emergency Fund) to provide effective immunisation for ninety percent of all children by the year 2000 to prevent the six major communicable diseases of childhood-diphtheria,

it has 185 member states. It stands for intellectual cooperation among countries.. It promotes world peace through co-operation in education, science and cultural fields. Prominent Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Radhakrishnan, Zakir Hussain and Indira Gandhi were closely associated with UNESCO's work. Jawaharlal Nehru described UNESCO as the conscience of the world community. Its headquarters are in Paris, France.

The Constitution of UNESCO declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." This is a very profound statement. There can be no peace between states if individual citizens do not observe tolerance and good neighbourliness. UNESCO is concerned with universal and liberal education, equal enjoyment of fruits of scientific discoveries, free flow of communication and promotion of cultural diversities.

UNESCO's mandate is clearly very good, leading to differing expectations and political controversies about its role. The withdrawal by the United States, the United Kingdom and Singapore in the 1980's is a major setback to UNESCO. It is an unfortunate example of a non-political agency turning into a hot-bed of politics.

Let us recognize that the destiny of nations is shaped in the class rooms and that today's students are tomorrow's citizens. Therefore, education has become the first major activity of UNESCO programmes. Over the years, it has pioneered the concept of literacy programmes with a thrust to make primary education universal and eliminate the root causes of illiteracy. It also helps train teachers, educational planners and administrators. It also renders help to its members in the formulation of educational policies and better financing and administration of educational institutions. It encourages local building and equipping of schools. In sum, it aims to achieve education as a human right, to democratise it, to benefit from new technology and to reform methods in order to keep abreast of rapid changes and the need for well trained citizens to forge the future. The National Open School and the Open Universities in India are also a result of UNESCO's initiative.

In the field of natural sciences UNESCO has played a significant role as a catalyst for regional and international research projects in such areas - man and the biosphere, environment, marine science, hydrology and oceanography. It has also assisted in the development of science policies in the member states. Several engineering colleges have been established in India with UNESCO's assistance.

In the social sciences, UNESCO has produced a large number of studies on such subjects as tensions leading to war, racism, the socio-economic factors of development and the relationship between man and his environment. Since its inception UNESCO has published more than 1000 books on education, science, culture, peace, women, human rights, disarmament and international law. Many of these books are sent as gifts to the national and university libraries throughout the world. Thus, it promotes social sciences as instruments for the realisation of human rights and peace.

Preservation of cultural heritage is another priority of UNESCO. It assists member states to protect and preserve their cultural and historical monuments, rare manuscripts and works of art. For example, its efforts to preserve Mohenjo Daro in Pakistan, are worth noting. It has also helped in the renovation and conservation of the Ranganathaswami Temple (Tamil Nadu) and in the restoration of the Ajanta Ellora paintings, besides helping the Indian Government to protect many monuments.

UNESCO also promotes "the free flow of ideas by word and image". Over the years, it has played a significant role in the field of communications. It has surveyed communication needs, helped journalists, assisted countries to set up news agencies, radio and television stations and advised them on communication policies. It has experimented

international agencies

- Describe the role of IMF, World Bank, WTO in reconstruction and socio-economic development
- Assess the role of multinational corporations (MNCs)

33.3 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

It is one of the oldest of the major agencies. It was established in 1919 as an autonomous institution associated with the League of Nations. After birth of the United Nations, it became the first UN Specialized Agency in 1946. The headquarters of ILO is in Geneva, Switzerland. In recognition of its service to the working class of the world, ILO was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.

One interesting feature of ILO is that representatives of workers and employers play a key role along with those of governments in formulating its policies.

The ILO was founded to advance the cause of social justice and to contribute to the establishment of universal and lasting peace. It works to promote social justice for working people everywhere. It formulates international policies and programmes to help improve working and living conditions of industrial workers. It creates international labour standards to serve as guidelines for national authorities in putting these policies into action. It carries out an extensive programme of technical co-operation to help governments in making these policies effective in practice. It is also engaged in promoting education and research to supplement these efforts.

One of the most important functions of ILO is to set labour standards. This activity is pursued in two ways—by adopting conventions and recommendations. ILO has adopted nearly 174 conventions in such areas as freedom of association, wages, hours and conditions of work, workmen; compensation, social insurance, vacation with pay, industrial safety, employment series, and labour inspection. For the ratifying states these conventions create binding obligations to implement the relevant provisions. ILO monitors the implementation of conventions on freedom of trade union through a committee meant for this. ILO recommendations (numbering more than 180) provide guidance for national policy, legislation and practice.

Through the programme of technical co-operation, its experts assist member countries specially the developing ones in such areas as vocational training, management techniques, manpower planning, employment policies, occupational safety and health, social security systems, co-operatives and small-scale handicraft industries.

In 1992 ILO launched the "International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)" to support national governments in their efforts to combat and eliminate child labour progressively, while simultaneously creating a worldwide movement against it. The IPEC in India has involved more than 50 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to design and implement over 100 Action Programmes in far flung villages, towns and cities across the country. The 1994-95 budget earmarked \$ 1.4 million (approximately Rs. 5.1 crores) for India. Under these programmes, several thousand child labourers were covered. Some of the working children were encouraged to pass their Secondary and Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate Exams of the National Open School.

33.4 UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

UNESCO was established in 1946 and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1996. As of 1997