

CUET · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CLASS XII · CODE 323

International Organisations

CUET unit: Contemporary World Politics — International Organisations (UN, its reform, India and the UN, and other transnational bodies like IMF, World Bank, WTO, IAEA, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch)

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Snapshot

- Explains why states create international organisations: not as super-states, but as fora to resolve disputes peacefully, pool effort on shared problems (disease, global warming), and reduce cheating on agreements.
- Traces the founding of the UN (1945) as a successor to the failed League of Nations, with 51 original members rising to 193 by 2011.
- Examines the structure of the UN — General Assembly, Security Council (5 permanent + 10 non-permanent), Secretariat (Secretary-General), specialised agencies (WHO, UNDP, UNHRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO).
- Discusses post-Cold-War reform demands, especially Security Council reform, the veto debate, and the criteria proposed for new permanent members.
- Lays out India's case for permanent membership, and concludes with the UN's role in a unipolar (US-dominated) world plus other transnational actors — IMF, World Bank, WTO, IAEA, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch.

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

- Two cartoons on the UN's perceived ineffectiveness during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon crisis pose the question: do we really need "talking shops" like the UN? (NCERT §Why International Organisations?, p. 46)
- Dag Hammarskjöld's line — "The United Nations was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell" — frames the UN's modest but vital purpose; Shashi Tharoor adds that "jaw-jaw is better than war-war." (NCERT §Why International Organisations?, p. 46)
- An international organisation is NOT a super-state with authority over its members; it is created by states, responds to states, and helps members resolve problems peacefully and cooperate on cross-border issues like disease eradication and global warming. (NCERT §Why International Organisations?, p. 47)
- International organisations help solve cooperation problems: how to share costs, divide benefits fairly, and stop members from cheating on agreements; they provide mechanisms, rules and bureaucracy. (NCERT §Why International Organisations?, p. 47)

- The League of Nations was born after World War I but failed to prevent World War II (1939–45); the UN was founded as its successor. (NCERT §Evolution of the UN, p. 48)
- Founding timeline: Atlantic Charter (Aug 1941), Declaration by United Nations (Jan 1942, 26 Allied nations), Tehran Conference (1943), Yalta Conference (Feb 1945), San Francisco Conference (April–May 1945), UN Charter signed by 50 nations on 26 June 1945 (Poland signed on 15 October, hence 51 original members), UN founded on 24 October 1945 (UN Day), India joined on 30 October 1945. (NCERT §Founding of the United Nations, p. 48)
- UN's objective: prevent international conflict, facilitate cooperation, stop conflicts from escalating into war, limit hostilities, and improve social and economic development. (NCERT §Evolution of the UN, p. 50)
- By 2011 the UN had 193 member states. The General Assembly gives one vote to each member. The Security Council has 5 permanent members — the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China — selected because they were the most powerful and the victors of WWII. (NCERT §Evolution of the UN, p. 50)
- The Secretary-General is the most visible public figure; António Guterres of Portugal (former PM 1995–2002 and UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2005–2015) is the 9th Secretary-General, took over on 1 January 2017. (NCERT §Evolution of the UN, p. 50)
- UN agencies and bodies for social/economic issues: WHO, UNDP, UNHRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO; war/peace handled in General Assembly and Security Council. (NCERT §Evolution of the UN, p. 50)
- Reform after the Cold War became necessary because: Soviet Union collapsed; US emerged as strongest power; Russia–US relations turned cooperative; China and India rose; Asian economies surged; many new countries joined; new challenges arose — genocide, civil war, ethnic conflict, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, climate change, environmental degradation, epidemics. (NCERT §Reform of the UN after the Cold War, p. 52)
- 1992 General Assembly resolution complained that the Security Council: (i) no longer represents contemporary political realities, (ii) reflects only Western values and interests, (iii) lacks equitable representation. (NCERT §Reform of Structures and Processes, p. 52)
- On 1 January 1997, Secretary-General Kofi Annan initiated an inquiry into UN reform. (NCERT §Reform of Structures and Processes, p. 52)
- Criteria proposed for new permanent/non-permanent members: a major economic power; a major military power; a substantial contributor to UN budget; a populous nation; a nation that respects democracy and human rights; a country that makes the Council more representative geographically, economically and culturally. (NCERT §Reform of Structures and Processes, p. 53)

- The Security Council membership was expanded from 11 to 15 in 1965, but the number of permanent members did not change. (NCERT §India and the UN Reforms, p. 57)
- The Security Council has 5 permanent + 10 non-permanent members. Non-permanent members serve two-year terms, cannot be re-elected immediately, and are elected to represent all continents. They do NOT have veto power. (NCERT §Reform of Structures and Processes, p. 54)
- Veto = the negative vote of a permanent member that can stall any Security Council decision even if all other members vote in favour. There are demands to abolish/modify the veto as being anti-democratic, but permanent members are unlikely to agree, and without the veto great powers may lose interest as in 1945. (NCERT §Reform of Structures and Processes, pp. 54–55)
- 2005 (UN's 60th anniversary) summit decisions: Peacebuilding Commission; international responsibility when national governments fail to protect citizens; Human Rights Council (operational 19 June 2006); Millennium Development Goals; condemnation of terrorism; Democracy Fund; winding up of Trusteeship Council. (NCERT §Jurisdiction of the UN, p. 55)
- India's case for permanent membership: world's most populous country (~one-fifth of world population), largest democracy, regular UN peacekeeping participation, economic emergence, regular financial contributions, and the symbolic boost of being a permanent member. (NCERT §India and the UN Reforms, pp. 57–58)
- Objections to India's bid: Pakistan; concerns about India's nuclear-weapons capability; India–Pakistan troubles making India ineffective; the chain-effect of also having to accommodate Brazil, Germany, Japan, possibly South Africa; the unrepresented continents (Africa, South America). (NCERT §India and the UN Reforms, p. 58)
- The UN in a unipolar world: US power cannot easily be checked — US is the only superpower, the largest UN financial contributor, the host country of the UN, has many nationals in the UN bureaucracy, and wields veto. The UN cannot balance US power but provides a space to modify US attitudes through dialogue and compromise. (NCERT §The UN in a Unipolar World, pp. 58–60)
- Other transnational organisations covered:
 - IMF — oversees international financial institutions; 190 members (Feb 2024); unequal votes (US 16.52%, the G-7 together holds 41.29%). (NCERT box on IMF, p. 47)
 - World Bank — set up 1944 during WWII; lends to developing countries for human development, agriculture, environment, infrastructure, governance; criticised for stringent loan conditions and forcing free-market reforms. (NCERT box on World Bank, p. 53)
 - WTO — set up in 1995 as successor to GATT; 164 members (29 July 2016); decisions taken unanimously; dominated in practice by US, EU, Japan. (NCERT box on WTO, p. 57)

- IAEA — established 1957 to implement Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace"; promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy and inspects facilities. (NCERT box on IAEA, p. 58)
- Amnesty International — NGO that promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, publishes reports often critical of government conduct. (NCERT box on Amnesty International, p. 59)
- Human Rights Watch — largest international human rights NGO based in the US; helped build coalitions to ban landmines, stop child soldiers, and establish the International Criminal Court. (NCERT box on Human Rights Watch, p. 60)

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
International Organisation	Not a super-state; created by and responds to states; comes into being when states agree to its creation; helps members resolve problems peacefully.	47
Veto Power	The negative vote of a permanent UNSC member that can stall a decision even if all other permanent and non-permanent members vote in favour.	55
Permanent Members of UNSC	US, Russia, UK, France, China — chosen because they were the most powerful and victors immediately after WWII; possess permanency and veto.	50, 54
Non-permanent Members of UNSC	10 members; serve two-year terms; cannot be re-elected immediately; elected to represent all continents; do NOT have veto.	54
Secretary-General	The most visible public figure and representative head of the UN; present incumbent is António Guterres (Portugal), the 9th SG, since 1 January 2017.	50
League of Nations	International organisation set up after WWI; could not prevent WWII; UN was founded as its successor.	48
IMF	International Monetary Fund — oversees international financial institutions and regulations; 190 members (Feb 2024) with unequal voting weights.	47
World Bank	Created in 1944 during WWII; funds development in poorer countries; criticised for free-market conditionalities.	53
WTO	World Trade Organisation — sets rules for global trade; set up 1995 as successor to GATT; 164 members (29 July 2016).	57
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency — established 1957 under Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace"; promotes peaceful nuclear use, inspects nuclear facilities.	58
Amnesty International	NGO that campaigns for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; publishes reports on human-rights abuses.	59

Term	Definition	Page
Human Rights Watch	Largest international human-rights NGO based in the US; helped campaigns to ban landmines, end child-soldier use, set up the ICC.	60

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- "Founding of the United Nations" timeline box (p. 48) — Atlantic Charter 1941; Declaration by UN Jan 1942; Tehran 1943; Yalta Feb 1945; San Francisco April–May 1945; UN Charter signed 26 June 1945 by 50 nations (51 with Poland on 15 Oct); UN founded 24 Oct 1945 (UN Day); India joined 30 Oct 1945.
- UN System organisational chart (p. 49) — sourced from newint.org / un.org showing principal organs and specialised agencies.
- List of nine UN Secretaries-General with country and contributions (p. 51): Trygve Lie (Norway), Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden), U Thant (Burma/Myanmar), Kurt Waldheim (Austria), Javier Perez de Cuellar (Peru), Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt), Kofi A. Annan (Ghana), Ban Ki-moon (South Korea), António Guterres (Portugal).
- "Major contributors to the UN regular budget for 2019" table (p. 53) — USA 22.0%, China 12.0%, Japan 8.5%, Germany 6.0%, UK 4.5%, France 4.4%, Italy 3.3%, Brazil 2.9%, Canada 2.7%, Russia 2.4%, India 0.8% (rank 21).
- Cartoons by Harry Harrison and Petar Pismestrovic on the UN in the 2006 Lebanon crisis (p. 46); Pat Bagley cartoon on Darfur (p. 56); Mike Lane cartoon on the US-UN relationship (p. 59).

2.5 Key Articles / Treaties / Events

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
Atlantic Charter, August 1941	Anglo-American statement of war aims	p. 48
Declaration by United Nations, 1 Jan 1942	26 Allied nations sign	p. 48
Tehran Conference, 1943	Allied wartime planning	p. 48
Yalta Conference, February 1945	Big Three on post-war order	p. 48
San Francisco Conference, April–May 1945	Drafting of UN Charter	p. 48
UN Charter signed, 26 June 1945	50 nations sign (Poland 15 Oct)	p. 48
UN founded, 24 October 1945	UN Day	p. 48

Reference	Source / Subject	NCERT cite
India joins UN, 30 October 1945	India's accession	p. 48
Bretton Woods, 1944	IMF and World Bank created	p. 53
IAEA, 1957	Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace	p. 58
GATT, 1947	Predecessor of WTO	p. 57
WTO, 1995	Successor to GATT — 164 members (29 July 2016)	p. 57
UNSC expansion, 1965	11 → 15 (non-permanent only)	p. 57
Kofi Annan reform inquiry, 1 January 1997	Reform initiative	p. 52
2005 60th-Anniversary Summit	Peacebuilding Commission, Responsibility to Protect, HRC, MDGs, Democracy Fund, end of Trusteeship Council	p. 55
Human Rights Council, operational 19 June 2006	Replaced HR Commission	p. 55
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	Promoted by Amnesty International	p. 59
International Criminal Court	Establishment supported by Human Rights Watch coalitions	p. 60

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Security Council expanded from 11 to 15 in 1965** — but ONLY in non-permanent members; permanent members did not change (p. 57). NTA often claims permanent membership has been expanded.
- 51 original UN members** (50 signed on 26 June 1945; Poland signed on 15 October 1945) — NOT 50 (p. 48).
- Veto belongs to permanent members only** — not the Secretary-General, not the General Assembly (p. 55).
- World Bank set up in 1944**, IMF same Bretton Woods moment; **WTO 1995** (NOT 1947 — that was GATT); **IAEA 1957** (pp. 53, 57, 58).
- UN Day is 24 October** (founding) — NOT 30 October (India's joining date) and NOT 26 June (Charter signing) (p. 48).
- IAEA was set up under Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace"** — not under Truman or Kennedy (p. 58).
- WTO is successor to GATT** (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) — not to the "General Arrangement on Trade and Tariffs" (p. 57).

8. **Antonio Guterres is the 9th Secretary-General** (since 1 January 2017) from Portugal — not the 8th or 10th (p. 50).
9. **193 UN member states** as of 2011 (p. 50) — distractors offer 190 or 196.
10. **Five UNSC permanent members — US, Russia, UK, France, China** (p. 50). Russia, not USSR. NTA may swap with Germany or Japan.
11. **HRC became operational on 19 June 2006** — distinct from the old Human Rights Commission (p. 55).
12. **Non-permanent UNSC members serve 2 years and cannot be re-elected immediately** (p. 54). Trap options say "may be re-elected".

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

This chapter is a very high-frequency CUET (UG) topic — across 2023-25, Political Science papers have repeatedly tested the UN's founding (year, members, Charter), composition of the Security Council, the veto, India's case for permanent membership, the matching of UN agencies (WHO/UNDP/UNHCR/UNESCO) and other transnational bodies (IMF, World Bank, WTO, IAEA), and Secretary-General trivia (current SG, country). Expect a mix of direct factual recall (founding date, founding members, veto definition), match-the-following on agencies and their functions, and statement-based "Which of the following is correct?" items on Security Council reform.

CUET 2023 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.32 (CUET 2023) The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established to promote:

- A) Atom for Peace B) Respect for all human rights C) Building international coalitions D) Global trade **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.33 (CUET 2023) Amnesty International, an NGO, campaigns for:

- A) Protection of the girl child B) Protection of old-age population C) Establishment of educational institutions D) Protection of human rights **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2024 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.31 (CUET 2024) The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in:

- A) 1951 B) 1953 C) 1955 D) 1957 **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.32 (CUET 2024) Which organization provides loans and grants for development, agriculture and environment protection?

- A) WTO B) World Bank C) IMF D) UNO **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.41 (CUET 2024) Identify the logo shown in the picture.

- A) EU B) SAARC C) UN D) ASEAN **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.42 (CUET 2024) Who was the second Secretary-General of the UN?

- A) U Thant B) Trygve Lie C) Dag Hammarskjöld D) Kurt Waldheim **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.43 (CUET 2024) Which day is celebrated as UN Day?

- A) 20 October B) 22 October C) 24 October D) 26 October **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.44 (CUET 2024) The UN was founded as a successor to:

- A) League of Nations B) Concert of Europe C) Council of Europe D) Hague Conference **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

Q.45 (CUET 2024) Full form of UNDP:

- A) United Nations Development Planning B) United Nations Development Programme C) United Nations Design Programme D) United News Development Programme
- Questions 46–50 (Comprehension Passage) **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key

CUET 2025 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

Q.31 (CUET 2025) The olive branches in the UN emblem signify:

- A) Security B) Reform C) World peace D) Human rights **Tests:** International Organisations **Answer:** Not in extracted key