

# Chapter 21. The United Nations Principal Organs —Composition and Functions

---

## Very Short Questions

**Question 1:** When was the United Nations formed? On which date the 'UN Day' is celebrated?

**Answer:** United Nations was formed on the 24th October 1945. The "UN Day" is celebrated on the 24th October.

**Question 2:** Which Articles of the UN Charter deal with the power and functions of the General Assembly?

**Answer:** Powers and functions of the General Assembly are laid down in Articles 10-17 of the UN Charter.

**Question 3:** Which organ of the United Nations approves the budget?

**Answer:** The General Assembly approves the budget of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and determines financial contribution of member States.

**Question 4:** Which organ is treated as the executive of the United Nations Organisation?

**Answer:** The Security Council is supposed to be the executive of the United Nations Organisation.

**Question 5:** Where does the Security Council have its headquarters?

**Answer:** The Security Council has its headquarters at New York, USA.

**Question 6:** When does the session of the Security Council take place?

**Answer:** The Security Council hold its meeting once in every month but may also meet, more often according to the need.

**Question 7:** Which is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations?

**Answer:** The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

**Question 8:** What are the qualifications for election as a Judge in the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** To be a Judge in the International Court of Justice a person has to be of high moral character with highest legal qualifications and recognized competence in international law.

**Question 9:** What special privileges do the Judges enjoy?

**Answer:** The Judges when engaged in the business of the Court enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities.

**Question 10:** Mention the nature of the functions; the International Court of Justice performs.

**Answer:** The functions of the International Court of Justice can be labelled as Voluntary Jurisdiction, Compulsory Jurisdiction and Advisory Jurisdiction.

**Question 11:** What is Voluntary Jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** Voluntary jurisdiction means that the States refer a matter to the Court voluntarily with mutual agreement on seeking the Court's Jurisdiction.

**Question 12:** Is the International Court of Justice open to individuals?

**Answer:** No, individuals cannot go to the International Court of Justice. Only member States of the UNO and various organs and agencies of the UN can benefit under this Court's Jurisdiction.

**Question 13:** Who appoints the Secretary General of the United Nations?

**Answer:** The Secretary General of the United Nations is appointed for 5 years on the recommendation of the Security Council by the General Assembly.

## Short Questions – I

**Question 1:** Which functions of the General Assembly tends to fulfill the ideals of UN Charter apart from maintenance of peace?

**Answer:** The General Assembly makes recommendations for the purpose of promoting international cooperation and encouraging the development of international law and its modification.

The General Assembly also assists in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction of race, sex, language and religion.

**Question 2:** When does the session of General Assembly take place?

**Answer:** The regular session of General Assembly begins each year on the third Tuesday of September and continues upto mid December at New York. The Secretary General can call a special session at the request of the Security Council any time if a majority of the members agree. An emergency session can also be called.

**Question 3:** How many members are there in the General Assembly? How do they reach to a decision?

**Answer:** All the members of UNO are members of the General Assembly. Presently there are 193 members. Each member of the general Assembly has one vote. Voting is on the

basis of simple majority, but decisions on important questions are reached upon with the support of two-third of majority of the members.

**Question 4:** Are the recommendations of the 'Uniting for Peace Resolution' session of the General Assembly obligatory?

**Answer:** The recommendations of the General Assembly in an emergency session called under 'Unity for Peace Resolution' are not obligatory on the member governments. However they have the support of the World opinion and moral authority of the World community.

**Question 5:** What is meant by 'important questions' while voting in the General Assembly?

**Answer:** Decision on 'important questions' are made by a two-third of majority. These important questions are matters pertaining to maintenance of peace and security, the election of non-permanent members of Security Council, the admission of new members to United Nations, expulsion of members and budgetary issues.

**Question 6:** Mention two most important functions of the General Assembly.

**Answer:** The two most important features of the General Assembly are:  
(i) The General Assembly can discuss any matter which falls within the scope of UN Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations.  
(ii) The maintenance of international peace and security and call Security Council's attention to it and make recommendations thereon.

**Question 7:** Name some of the functions of the General Assembly connected with UN appointments.

**Answer:** The General Assembly elects the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the members of the Economic and Social Council and the members of Trusteeship Council.

The General Assembly also elect Judges of the International Court of Justice jointly with the Security Council. It appoints the Secretary General of the United Nations on recommendations of the Security Council.

**Question 8:** What do you understand by General Assembly?

**Answer:** The General Assembly is the main deliberative organ of the U.N. composed of all member States, each of them having one vote. Decisions on important questions, like peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matter require two-third of majority. Decision on other matters are reached by simple majority. It can be called the 'Legislature' of United Nations.

**Question 9:** What do you understand by 'Uniting for Peace Resolution'?

**Answer:** The 'Uniting for Peace Resolution' was adopted by the General Assembly on 3rd November, 1950. The General Assembly was authorized to take action if the Security

Council failed to do so on account of lack of unanimity of its permanent members, in a situation of threat to international peace, breach of peace or threat of aggression.

**Question 10:** What time is required for calling an 'Uniting for Peace Resolution' session?

**Answer:** 'Uniting for Peace Resolution' session can be called within 24 hours on the request of the Security Council or of a majority of General Assembly Members. If the Security Council is prevented by 'veto' of its permanent members, from exercising its primary responsibility for international peace and security.

**Question 11:** How is the Security Council formed?

**Answer:** The Security Council consists of five permanent members: China, France, Russia, Britain and the United States of America, and ten non-permanent members, who are elected by the General Assembly by two-third of majority, for a term of two years. A retiring member is not eligible for immediate re-election. In all, the Security Council thus consists of 15 members.

**Question 12:** What do you understand by 'Power to Veto'? Name the permanent member countries of the Security Council.

**Answer:** A negative vote of a permanent member is called Veto. It is exercised by the five permanent members of the Security Council. It is essential that on any issue China, France, USA, UK and Russia must be unanimous in their support. In case any one member do not support the issue then the motion cannot be passed. However abstention from voting is not considered as veto.

**Question 13:** On what basis are the ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly?

**Answer:** The ten non-permanent members are elected on the basis of geographical distribution. Five members are from Asia and Africa, two from Latin America, two from Western Europe and one from Eastern Europe. Each member of the Security Council has one vote.

**Question 14:** How are decisions arrived at in the Security Council?

**Answer:** Each of the 15 members of the Security Council has one vote. Decisions on procedural, matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members. The Council is powerless to act if veto is used by any of the five permanent members. Decisions on matters other than questions on procedure are decided by affirmative vote of nine members including concurrence of all the five permanent members.

**Question 15:** What do you think is the more powerful organ of the United Nations Organisation the General Assembly or the Security Council?

**Answer:** The General Assembly and the Security Council are both very important organs of the UNO. The former deals with the legislative functions and the latter is responsible for

their execution. Thus the powers and functions of each make it complementary for the other.

**Question 16:** What do you know about the composition of the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** The International Court of Justice consists of 15 Judges elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council for a term of 9 years. No two Judges can be nationals of the same State. The President and Vice-President of the Court are elected for a term of three years. The Judges are eligible for re-election. Five Judges retire after every three years.

**Question 17:** How is a decision taken in the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** Usually all the Judges hear the cases that come before the Court but the presence of a minimum nine members is essential. The decisions are taken by a majority vote and in case of a tie, President is empowered to give a casting vote. A State which is a party in a dispute, its national 4 as the Judge of the Court cannot take part in the decision of that particular case.

**Question 18:** What do you understand by International Court of Justice's Advisory Jurisdiction?

**Answer:** The International Court of Justice is empowered to give advisory opinion on any legal question referred to it by any organ of United Nations or its agencies. The advisory opinion is not binding.

**Question 19:** What is the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** The Court possesses compulsory jurisdiction over all matters provided in the United Nations Charter or in treaties and conventions in force. A State may declare under the 'optional clause' that it recognizes as compulsory for another State to accept a particular obligation under the Court's jurisdiction. This can be only in case the States have already made an arrangement to this effect.

**Question 20:** What are the guiding principles for the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** The International Court of Justice bases its decisions on international laws. Sometimes the parties involved are agreeable on decisions, which are made on general principles of natural justice and fairness.

**Question 21:** Is the Judgment of the International Court of Justice final? What recourse does it have for non compliance?

**Answer:** The Judgement of the Court is final and there is no scope for an appeal against it. The parties involved in the case are obliged to abide by it. If one of the party States fails in abiding by it the other can refer the matter to the Security Council which decides the measure to be taken against it and enforce the Judgement.

**Question 22:** What is Secretariat? Who does it have as its head?

**Answer:** The Secretariat is the administrative body of the United Nations with the Secretary General as its head. It has a staff of more than 1400 men and women coming from all the member countries of the UNO. Its headquarters is at New York.

**Question 23:** What is the Economic and Social Council? How is it formed?

**Answer:** The Economic and Social Council of the UNO is the principal organ to co-ordinate the economic and social functions. It coordinates the functions of the specialized agencies and institutions of the UNO.

The Council consists of 54 members elected by the General Assembly for a term of three years. Its headquarters is at New York.

**Question 24:** What is the Trusteeship Council? How is it formed?

**Answer:** The trusteeship Council performs the task of supervision the administration of the trust territories under its care. It is made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council i.e., USSR, USA, UK, France and China with its headquarters at New York, USA.

**Question 25:** Give in brief about the functions of the Economic social council.

**Answer:** The Economic Social Council: It co-ordinates the economic and social functions leading to peace building all over the world. It works with the help of a number of specialized agencies to bring about economic and social co-operation and cultural interaction for establishment of human rights and freedoms.

**Question 26:** Which works are distributed to the Trusteeship Council and the Secretarial.

**Answer:** (i) The Trusteeship Council: It supervises administration of the trust territories placed under it.

(ii) The Secretariat: It is the administrative wing with a staff of more than 1,400 and headed by the Secretary General.

## Short Questions – II

**Question 1:** What are the various major organs of the United Nations Organisation?

**Answer:** The following are the major organs of the United Nations according to Article 7 of the Charter:

(i) The General Assembly. (ii) The Security Council.

(iii) The Economic and Social Council. (iv) The Trusteeship Council.

(v) The International Court of Justice. (vi) The Secretariat.

**Question 2:** Can the General Assembly be treated as the controlling major organ of the U.N.O.?

**Answer:** The General Assembly is the principal deliberative organ of the UN. It considers reports of the Security Council and other organs, considers and approves of the budget. It elects non-permanent members of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and Trusteeship Council. It also jointly with the Security Council elects the Judges of the

International Court of Justice and appoints the Secretary General of the UNO on recommendation of the Security Council. It deals with all matters of policy making and can be treated as the Legislature of the UNO.

**Question 3:** Under what conditions does the General Assembly act where the Security Council may fail?

**Answer:** The General Assembly may act under the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution adopted by it in November 1950. In case there is lack of unanimity among the Permanent Members of the Security Council over a case and there is a threat of international peace, the Assembly can make recommendation to its members to take collective action including use of armed force to restore international peace and security.

**Question 4:** What is the composition of the Security Council.

**Answer:** (i) The Security Council is the executive body of the UNO and consists of total 15 members.  
(ii) It consists of 5 permanent members viz; U.S.A., Russia, England, France and China and 10 non-permanent members.  
(iii) The non-permanent members of Security Council are elected by the General Assembly for two years. Besides, the permanent members have the right to Veto. By the application of this right, any permanent member may reject any decision of the Security Council.

**Question 5:** What functions of the Security Council make it, the most important organ as far as internal matters of the UN are concerned?

**Answer:** The Security Council performs many important functions:  
(i) It recommends the admission of new members.  
(ii) It exercises trusteeship functions of the United Nations in 'Strategic Areas'.  
(iii) It recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of Secretary General and along with the General Assembly elects the Judges of the International Court of Justice. It recommends suspension and expulsion of the members.

**Question 6:** Explain the composition of the International Court of Justice.

**Answer: Composition of the International Court of Justice:**

(i) The International Court of Justice consists of 15 Judges for nine year term.  
(ii) The Judges are elected both by the General Assembly and the Security Council.  
(iii) Each Judge should be from a different country. If 2 people from one country are nominated, the elder one is selected.  
(iv) They elect their President and Vice-President for a three year term. The decisions of the Court are made by majority of the judges present.

**Question 7:** Discuss about the role of the International Court of Justice.

**Answer: The International Court of Justice:** The International Court of Justice deals with dispute referred to it by Party States voluntarily by mutual consent. This is called voluntary jurisdiction.  
Then the Court has compulsory jurisdiction in maintaining and enforcing treaties,

conventions and international obligations among States. All matters of the UN Charter are under the jurisdiction of this Court.

Advisory jurisdiction empowers it to give advisory opinion on legal questions referred to it by any organ of the UN or its agencies, which is not binding.

**Question 8:** What type of matters are referred to the International Court of Justice?

**Answer:** Matters involving legal issues, interpretation of International Law, disputes among parties involving international convention, customs and general practices accepted as law, general principles of law recognized by nations, general decisions and teachings of great jurists of various nations are dealt with in the International Court of Justice. The Court also decides on the reparation a party has to make for breach of an international agreement and solves disputes pertaining to the interpretation of the International Law.

## Long Questions

**Question 1:** What is the composition of the General Assembly? How does it hold the deliberations?

**Answer:** The General Assembly is the only organ of the UN in which all member countries are represented. All member States have equal voting power and equal status. Each member country may be represented by upto five state delegates but each and all of them has only one vote. While some decisions like passing of budgets, admission of new members may require two-thirds, other decisions need simple majority. Since new and smaller States outnumber the big nations, their combined weight and strength has prevented domination of big nations. This composition of the General Assembly is indeed its greatest strength.

The General Assembly holds deliberations by conducting regular sessions, which begin on third Tuesday in September every year and continue until mid December. However, if required by more than half of the member States special sessions may also be held.

**Question 2:** Mention the major functions of the General Assembly.

**Answer: Functions of the General Assembly:**

- (i) To discuss any matter within the scope of UN Charter relating to powers and functions of any of the organs of United Nations.
- (ii) To discuss any question relating to maintenance of peace and make recommendations thereon.
- (iii) It initiates studies in international co-operation and make recommendations for the development of international laws and its modification.
- (iv) It ensures action for realization of fundamental rights and fundamental freedoms.
- (v) It receives and considers annual reports from the Security Council and other organs of UNO, considers budget and election of permanent members of the Security Council and members of the other organs of UN. It elects new members.
- (vi) General Assembly appoints the Secretary General on the recommendation of Security Council.
- (vii) It has special powers under 'Uniting for Peace' resolution which takes place when due to the use of 'Veto' in the Security Council a deadlock is created.

**Question 3:** Discuss the role of Security Council in maintaining peace.

**Answer: The functions of the Security Council related to maintaining world peace:**

**(i) At the time of war:** The Security Council may call for cease fire to stop aggression or for cutting off communication links with the aggressor nation or severing diplomatic relations with it.

**(ii) Investigatory role:** They may investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction. They can also recommends methods for adjusting such disputes.

**(iii) Military action:** Security Council may resort to military action. Such action may include operations by air, sea or land forces supplied by Member-Nations.

**(iv) Admission of new members:** New-members are admitted by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

**Question 4:** How does the Security Council enforce its recommendations?

**Answer:** The Security Council enforces its decisions through the following means:

(i) Imposition of sanctions through Member-States of the UN against the aggressor.

(ii) The 'Unanimity Rule' popularly known as Veto. A 'No' of any particular Permanent Member, even though all other members might be in favour of the decision, can make the resolution inoperative. This 'Veto' Actually makes the Security Council stronger as it prevents the parties in dispute from manipulating the situation at international level in their favour. Kashmir problem is a case in point.

(iii) Armed intervention, as the UN did with Iraq, when there is majority decision.

(iv) Force the parties to come to negotiating table through various other means.

**Question 5:** Mention three functions of the International Court of Justice.

**Answer: (i) Voluntary Jurisdiction:** Its jurisdiction covers all cases which the parties at dispute refer to it by mutual consent. One party alone may refer the dispute to the Court. If the other party undertakes to defend itself in a case brought before it, the Court interprets it as consent to the reference.

**(ii) Evolving procedures for peaceful Settlement of Disputes:** At any stage of the disputes the Court may recommend appropriate procedures or methods of settlement. It may also recommend terms of settlement.

**(iii) Advisory Opinion:** The International Court of Justice gives advisory opinion on any matter of international law as and when requested by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

## Picture Based Questions

**Question 1:** Study the picture shown and answer the questions that follow:



- (i) Identify the organization associated with the given emblem.
- (ii) Where is the headquarters of this organization located? Name the principal organs of this organization.

**Answer:** (i) The organization associated with the above emblem is the United Nations Organizations.

(ii) The headquarter of this organization is located in New York city. The six principal organs of U. N. are:

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