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United Nations (UN)

Introduction

United Nations (UN), **international organization** established on October 24, 1945. The United Nations (UN) was the second multipurpose international organization established in the 20th century that was worldwide in scope and membership. Its predecessor, the **League of Nations**, was created by the **Treaty of Versailles** in 1919 and disbanded in 1946. Headquartered in New York City, the UN also has regional offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. Its official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. For a list of UN member countries and secretaries-general, *see below*.

According to its Charter, the UN aims:

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights...to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

In addition to maintaining peace and security, other important objectives include developing friendly relations among countries based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; achieving worldwide cooperation to solve international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems; respecting and promoting **human rights**; and serving as a centre where countries can coordinate their actions and activities toward these various ends.

The UN formed a continuum with the League of Nations in general purpose, structure, and functions; many of the UN's principal organs and related agencies were adopted from similar structures established earlier in the

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