

What the UN Does

for peace...

The main purpose of the United Nations is to preserve world peace. In many instances, the Organization has played an active part in reducing tensions, preventing conflicts, or putting an end to fighting where wars have broken out in various parts of the world. It has helped to resolve dangerous disputes between nations, with the consent of the Governments concerned.

The means are varied: a Security Council decision ordering a cease-fire and setting up machinery to settle the underlying dispute...a compromise worked out by a mediator...quiet diplomatic contacts in the corridors or through the good offices of the Secretary-General...organization of peace-keeping forces or observer missions.



After the October 1973 hostilities in the Middle East, a United Nations Emergency Force was sent to the area to help peace efforts. UNEF soldiers patrol the buffer zone between Egyptian and Israeli forces.

Some examples:

The conflict in the MIDDLE EAST has been a major concern of the United Nations. In 1949, armistice agreements between Israel and four Arab States were concluded under the auspices of a United Nations mediator. In 1956, and again in 1973, a United Nations Emergency Force was dispatched to the area to help restore peace after outbreaks of hostilities.

The United Nations forces are composed of military contingents from Member States. The first UNEF was organized in the Suez crisis, under resolutions of the General Assembly; the Force dispatched in 1973 operates under mandates of the Security Council.

Also under the Council's mandate is the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine (UNTSO)—composed of military observers, liaison officers and technical personnel. UNTSO has been on duty in the area for 25 years, reporting on breaches of cease-fire and seeking to halt fighting when incidents occur.

Principles for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East area were set forth by the Security Council in November 1967. On the basis of this resolution, the Secretary-General has exerted all possible efforts to promote an agreement between Israel and the Arab countries.

Soon after the former Belgian colony of the CONGO (now Zaire) became independent in 1960, the new Government called for United Nations military assistance in the face of disorders and the return of Belgian troops. The Security Council responded promptly. Within 36 hours, United Nations troops began to arrive in the Congo. Civilian experts also were rushed to the area to operate essential public services. The United Nations operation in the Congo

Self-determination and independence for all is an important UN goal. Youngsters in Rwanda, former Trust Territory, celebrate their country's attainment of independence.

protected the country from outside interference, helped maintain law and order and preserved the country's territorial unity by eliminating foreign mercenaries from the secessionist province of Katanga. The Force remained until 1964.

The United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in CYPRUS (UNFICYP) was dispatched by the Security Council in 1964 to prevent recurrence of large-scale fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, help maintain law and order and contribute to a return to normal conditions. UNFICYP, now totalling about 3,100 officers and men from nine countries, remains on guard in Cyprus between the opposing armed forces. In the meantime, talks between the two communities were arranged, under the auspices of the United Nations, in an effort to settle the Cyprus problem. The Cyprus Force was originally intended to remain only three months. But the search for a permanent settlement has been a slow process and the Security Council (as well as the parties involved) found it necessary to keep the Force on duty.

Hostilities between the Netherlands and Indonesia were ended with the aid of United Nations mediation and conciliation in 1947. A United Nations commission helped to establish the independent Indonesia in 1947. Later, the United Nations aided in negotiations to end Dutch-Indonesian fighting over West New Guinea (West Irian). After a period of direct United Nations administration of West Irian—with the security force supplied by Pakistan—Indonesia took over in accordance with agreed arrangements.

A United Nations commission and observer group were instrumental in halting hostilities between India and Pakistan in KASHMIR in 1948-1949. United Nations military observers remained in the area to supervise the cease-fire line. When fighting broke out again between the two countries in 1965, the Security Council brought about a cease-fire, and United Nations observers supervised that cease-fire as well as the subsequent withdrawal of troops, both in Kashmir and along the India-Pakistan border. United Nations observers are still in Kashmir to observe and report on the maintenance of the cease-fire in that area.

The only collective military enforcement action taken so far by forces under the United Nations flag was in KOREA. At the request of the Security Council in June 1950 (with the Soviet Union absent in protest over the issue of Chinese representation), 16 nations sent troops in response to complaints of aggression against South Korea by North Korean forces. Fighting continued until July 1953, when an armistice was signed. Unification of Korea by peaceful means has remained an objective of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General and his special representatives have assisted in finding solutions in a number of cases. In the 1962 crisis concerning Cuba, the Secretary-General assisted Soviet and United States leaders in averting the serious threat to peace. Representatives of the Secretary-General helped secure a cease-fire in the Dominican Republic (1965)...eased tensions between Spain and the newly independent Equatorial Guinea (1969)...solved a dispute between the United Kingdom and Iran (1970) over the future status of Bahrain (both sides accepted the representative's finding that the people wanted independence)...helped alleviate some of the humanitarian problems related to the India-Pakistan conflict (1971-1972).

Regrettably, the United Nations sometimes is left on the sidelines when nations avoid turning to the Organization, or call too late for help in heading off an imminent conflict.

The United Nations also seeks constantly to halt the arms race and reduce and eventually eliminate armaments. It has been a permanent forum for disarmament negotiations, a source of recommendations, and an initiator of authoritative studies on effects of nuclear and chemical and

Nations have often sought UN assistance in humanitarian causes—ranging from providing adequate food for children to caring for refugees and helping to rebuild disaster-stricken areas.



Members of a UN mission visit liberated areas of Guinea (Bissau) to hear views of people opposed to colonial rule and observe progress of liberation movement.



UN diplomacy means not only committee meetings but informal gatherings of ambassadors. Whether in the corridors or in meeting rooms, contacts of delegations help to resolve disputes and settle problems. (Above, scene in Delegates' Lounge.)

biological weapons and the economic aspects of disarmament.

Successful disarmament negotiations have been held bilaterally and through international bodies (the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which meets regularly in Geneva; the United Nations committees on outer space and on the sea-bed). As a result of this work, with the constant urging of the General Assembly, a number of partial steps have been taken through treaties: the 1963 Moscow Treaty bans nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water...The Outer Space Treaty of 1966 bans nuclear weapons from outer space and prohibits claims of national sovereignty in space...The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (1967) created a nuclear-free zone...The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968) committed nuclear Powers signing it not to transfer weapons to others; the non-nuclear-weapon States undertake not to receive or manufacture such weapons.

Development, production and stockpiling of biological weapons were banned under another treaty in 1971. This was the first treaty in modern times to provide for the elimination of existing weapons. Emplacement of nuclear weapons on the sea-bed was banned by a treaty approved in 1970. The Soviet-United States agreement limiting strategic arms (1972) resulted from talks begun in 1969 after the Assembly urged such negotiations.

Principles for the achievement of peace, international security and friendly relations among States have been set forth in a number of declarations by the Assembly.

for justice...

The Charter goals of justice and equal rights, for individuals and for peoples, have been pursued by the United Nations from its early days. As one of its first tasks, the Organization formulated mankind's first Universal Declaration of Human Rights—an historic proclamation of the basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which men and women everywhere are entitled. The right to life, liberty, privacy, nationality...freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression...the right to work, to be educated, to take part in government. These are only some of the rights spelled out in the Declaration, which has been incorporated or reflected in the constitutions of a number of countries.

The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948, a date commemorated each year as Human Rights Day. This document remains the guiding standard, but the work did not end there. The next aim was to transform the proclaimed rights into law.

Many international conventions, by which nations commit themselves to ensure particular rights, have been concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and its agencies. These include conventions on genocide, political rights of women, status of refugees, slavery and forced labour, discrimination in various fields and elimination of all racial discrimination.

Measures to check on complaints of rights violations are provided for under two covenants adopted by the Assembly—one concerning civil and political rights, and the other, economic, social and cultural rights. The covenants—to come into force when 35 countries have ratified them—amplify and put into binding legal form the rights set forth in the Declaration.

Self-determination, the right of peoples to govern themselves and choose their own way of life, was a goal when the Charter was signed; today it is a fact in most of the lands formerly under colonial rule. The Trusteeship System has already achieved its aims in all but two of the Trust Territories, and scores of other former colonies in Africa and Asia have gained their independence and joined the Organization. The United Nations has constantly encouraged the aspirations of the peoples under foreign administration, and pressed for self-determination.

The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the Assembly in 1960, solemnly proclaimed the necessity of bringing a speedy end to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination. It called for immediate steps to transfer all powers to the peoples of all colonial Territories. Efforts to achieve this objective have been prodded by the 24-member Special Committee on Decolonization.

Today, the last stronghold of minority and foreign domination in the world is in southern Africa; through various actions, the United Nations lends its support to the cause of

national liberation movements struggling against oppressive régimes.

South Africa's apartheid (racial segregation) system, denounced by the General Assembly as a "crime against humanity", has been the target of a sustained campaign, involving methods from a Security Council-imposed arms embargo to a boycott of segregated sports events. A United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid constantly focuses world attention on the problem. The Security Council also has demanded that South Africa get out of Namibia, a vast territory for which the United Nations assumed direct responsibility when it revoked South Africa's Mandate there in 1966.

The ending of Portuguese rule over colonies, including Angola and Mozambique, is another United Nations objective. And in Southern Rhodesia, where a minority régime rebelled against the United Kingdom in 1965, United Nations action to obtain majority rule has included a Security Council order to all nations to stop trading with that régime. The economic sanctions, the first ever ordered by the Council, have been heeded by most nations, but totally disregarded by South Africa and Portugal.

The Organization also has made important contributions towards expanding the rule of law among nations. The International Court of Justice has assisted countries in solving a number of legal disputes, and has issued important advisory opinions on United Nations activities. But the Court would do much more—if the nations were more willing to bring their disputes before it.

Many conventions and treaties to regulate international conduct have been concluded under United Nations auspices. Efforts to codify the law of nations are carried out by the International Law Commission and by a Commission on International Trade Law. The world's main conventions on the law of the seas, for example, resulted from the International Law Commission's work. Another special United Nations body elaborated the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among States.

for progress...

A major part of United Nations work—measured in terms of money and personnel involved—goes into the varied programmes aimed at achieving a better life for all people of the world. Underlying the development efforts is the concept stated in the Charter that conditions of stability and well-being are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations.

An enormous gap remains between the advanced countries and the two thirds of the world's people living in developing countries. Yet for the first time in history, most nations now accept the idea that this inequality must not be allowed to continue, and that rich and poor countries should co-operate to improve the lives of all people.

The International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (the 1970s), approved by the General Assembly in 1970, sets forth in considerable detail the targets for economic and social progress in the coming decade, and goes beyond that to state the commitment of Member nations to carry out specific measures so that the goals can be attained.

The Strategy covers virtually every area of economic and social development. It stresses the need for more equitable distribution of income and wealth to promote social justice and efficiency of production. Among other goals, the Strategy seeks greater financial resources for developing countries. It states that each advanced country should transfer annually to the developing world resources amounting to at least 1 per cent of its gross national product.

The United Nations helps the developing countries to exploit untapped resources, fully employ manpower resources, make use of modern science and technology, and plan for national and regional development—and encourages greater efforts by advanced countries to enlarge the Third World's share in the world economy. International agencies, which played only a minor role in the financing of Third World development up to the 1950s, had become the channel for over \$1 billion of net financing by the late 1960s.

On the front line of the struggle to promote social and economic progress is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Its objective is to help low-income countries to realize more fully the potential wealth of their underutilized human and natural resources.

In co-operation with 16 United Nations agencies and institutions and the regional economic commissions, UNDP works with the Governments of developing nations in carrying out high-priority development projects. It is the world's largest single source of multinational "pre-investment" aid, carrying out projects which help the countries to attract capital investment needed for rapid progress and to use all available resources as effectively as possible.

About 90 countries currently receive UNDP assistance. They pay about half the cost of each project. The results have been noteworthy: over \$4,000 million (\$4 billion) in follow-up investments have been directly or indirectly stimulated by UNDP-supported projects. Prospecting with United Nations technical and financial aid has led to the discovery of minerals of an estimated gross value of \$13,000 million (\$13 billion) during the past decade. More than 500,000 men and women have been equipped with vitally needed productive skills—agricultural and industrial technicians, engineers and plant managers, administrators and planners, educators and medical personnel. Millions of people have been protected against crippling diseases, and

millions of dollars have been saved through introduction of modern production techniques.

At any given time there are thousands of United Nations experts in the field all over the world, helping to apply their special know-how to national and regional problems.

When countries are stricken by natural disasters or confronted with other emergency situations, the United Nations often plays an important role in helping to provide humanitarian aid—to feed and house refugees or to rebuild from the ruins caused by floods, earthquake or conflict. Part of this aid is in the form of direct assistance from the United Nations and its agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food

A multi-national UN geological survey team at work in Ethiopia. Discovering new mineral and energy resources is one of many activities aided by the UN.



Modern technology can speed the progress of developing countries. Work of soil scientists in Pakistan, aided by UN, will help in planning irrigation, conservation, land settlement.

Programme (a joint operation of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization). The United Nations also serves as a channel and co-ordinator of international contributions in such emergencies. The largest operation of this kind since the aftermath of the Second World War related to the India-Pakistan conflict of 1971: two massive programmes, each costing hundreds of millions of dollars contributed by Member States and United Nations bodies, assisted 10 million refugees who fled to India and aided relief and rehabilitation in Bangladesh.

The United Nations "family" of organizations promotes global co-operation in many fields. The specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies work continuously towards the goals of expanding education and spreading scientific knowledge...increasing food and other agricultural production...safe-guarding health and combating disease...improving the lot of working men and women, and increasing employment opportunities...speeding economic development by spurring world trade and helping developing countries build industries and market their exports...improving international weather communications and postal services, as well as international co-operation in shipping and aviation...lending or investing billions of dollars for development projects or factory expansions...balancing the world's currencies...bringing health and other services to children and mothers...aiding refugees and meeting emergency disaster needs...working to stop illicit narcotics traffic...helping countries to carry out their population policies.

When the Organization was founded, many of the activities now of concern to the United Nations were undreamed of—including efforts to ensure peaceful and beneficial uses of outer space, atomic energy and the vast area of the planet covered by the seas. The United Nations took a leading role in focusing world concern on the growing dangers to the human environment, and the newly established United Nations Environment Programme encourages international co-operation to prevent pollution of air and water and to make wiser use of resources.

The Environment Programme was set up as a result of a world conference organized by the United Nations (Stockholm, 1972). Major United Nations world conferences in 1974 tackled still other global concerns: the world's food supply, the rapid growth of population and the law of the sea.