

## UNITED NATIONS DAY

NEWS: June 26, 2025 marks 80 years of the signing of the UN Charter in 1945, considered the founding treaty of the United Nations.

- The Charter came into force on **October 24, 1945**, now observed as United Nations Day.

## WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

### Background of the UN Charter

- The **United Nations Charter** was signed on **June 26, 1945**, at the **San Francisco Conference** (officially, the United Nations Conference on International Organization) by **50 founding countries**, shortly after World War II.
- It was **based on proposals** developed in the **1944 Dumbarton Oaks Conference**, a consultation between **China, the USSR, the UK, and the USA**.
- The Charter contains a **Preamble and 111 Articles**, grouped into **19 Chapters**, laying the foundational legal and institutional framework of the UN system.

### Core Functions of the UN Charter

- **Maintain International Peace and Security:** Prevent conflicts, support peacekeeping, and resolve disputes through diplomacy.
- **Promote Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:** Uphold dignity, equality, and civil liberties for all individuals across member states.
- **Encourage Social Progress and Better Living Standards:** Advance health, education, employment, and economic well-being globally.
- **Foster International Cooperation:** Facilitate joint action among states on political, economic, social, and humanitarian issues.

### Principal Organs of the United Nations

- **General Assembly (GA):** The main deliberative body where all 193 member states are represented equally.
- **Security Council (SC):** Responsible for maintaining international peace and security; consists of 5 permanent and 10 rotating members.
- **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):** Coordinates socio-economic and developmental affairs.

- **Trusteeship Council:** Now dormant; initially oversaw decolonization and administration of trust territories.
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** The UN's main judicial organ, settling disputes between states based on international law.
- **UN Secretariat:** Headed by the Secretary-General, it carries out the day-to-day work of the UN.

### What is the UN80 Initiative?

- **Launched in March 2025** by Secretary-General António Guterres to commemorate the UN's **80th anniversary**, the **UN80 Initiative** is a **system-wide reform agenda**.
- It seeks to **modernize the UN** to better respond to **21st-century global challenges**, such as digital governance, climate change, and geopolitical instability.

### Three Core Pillars of the UN80 Reform Agenda

- **Efficiency & Effectiveness:**
  - Eliminate bureaucratic duplication and streamline internal operations.
  - Reallocate functions to **lower-cost duty stations** to reduce overheads.
- **Mandate Review:**
  - Review over **40,000 existing mandates**—many of which are outdated.
  - Use **AI tools** to identify, streamline, or eliminate redundant directives.
- **Structural Realignment:**
  - Reassess the **architecture of the UN system**.
  - Realign programmes, departments, and possibly reorganize institutions to enhance coherence and adaptability.

### Rationale for UN Reform

- **Financial Strains:**
  - The UN is undergoing a **multi-year liquidity crisis**.
  - As of 2025, only **75 out of 193 members** have paid their dues on time, leading to budget cuts and operational delays.

- **Mandate Overload:**
  - An accumulation of thousands of mandates has made UN operations **inefficient and less responsive** to real-time global challenges.
- **Evolving Global Threats:**
  - New crises—**AI governance**, pandemics, climate change, cyber warfare, and complex regional conflicts (e.g., Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan)—demand updated institutional responses.
- **Multilateral Trust Deficit:**
  - **Polarization among powerful states** and growing **public disillusionment** with global institutions have weakened the legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN.

### India's Advocacy for UN Reform

- India argues that the current structure of the **UN Security Council (UNSC)** is **outdated, undemocratic, and unrepresentative** of modern geopolitical realities.
- India is part of the **G4 Group (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan)**, which advocates for:
  - **Expansion of the Security Council**, including permanent seats for emerging powers.
  - **Better regional representation**, especially from **Africa, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific**.
- India has served **eight terms as a non-permanent member** of the Security Council and is a **strong voice for equitable multilateralism**.

### Key Challenges to UN Reform

- **Political Pushback by the P5:**
  - The five permanent members (US, UK, France, Russia, China) have **veto power**, and little motivation to allow reforms that could reduce their influence.
- **Stalled Negotiations:**
  - The **Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN)** on UNSC reform have been in progress since **2008**, but no formal draft or consensus has been reached.
- **Lack of Financial Clarity:**
  - The **UN80 Initiative** lacks a **dedicated financial framework**, making implementation uncertain.
- **Absence of Oversight Mechanisms:**

- There is **no independent body** to monitor reform outcomes, leaving progress heavily reliant on the political will of member states.
- **Consensus Fatigue & Shift to Regionalism:**
  - Many smaller nations feel **excluded from elite-led negotiations**, leading to apathy.
  - Growing interest in **regional groupings** like BRICS, Quad, and SCO is diluting the centrality of UN-led multilateralism.

### The Way Ahead

- The **UN80 Initiative** is a significant step toward making the UN **more agile, inclusive, and responsive** to contemporary global needs.
- India continues to champion **Security Council reform** as the cornerstone of broader UN reform.
- However, the success of the initiative **depends on overcoming entrenched P5 resistance**, securing sustainable funding, building inclusive mechanisms, and establishing **transparent monitoring structures** to ensure real accountability.

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/UN80>