

## 6. United Nations Celebrates 80 Years – I R

October 24, 2025, marks the celebration of United Nations Day and the 80th anniversary of the UN's establishment.

### History of the United Nations (UN)

#### Early Efforts for Peace (1899–1902)

**1899** – The International Peace Conference in The Hague aimed at preventing wars, peacefully resolving crises, and establishing rules of warfare.

**1902** – The Permanent Court of Arbitration was established, laying the groundwork for the modern International Court of Justice (ICJ).

#### League of Nations (1919)

Created under the Treaty of Versailles post-World War I. Its purpose was to promote international cooperation and maintain peace. International Labour Organization (ILO) was established as a specialized agency under the League to ensure social justice and labor rights globally.

#### Origin of the UN Name (1942)

Coined by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt during WWII. Declaration by United Nations (1942) – Signed by 26 nations, pledging to fight Axis Powers and refrain from separate peace treaties.

#### Formation of the UN (1945)

**San Francisco Conference** – Delegates from 50+ countries drafted and signed the UN Charter, establishing the UN as an intergovernmental organization.

**October 24, 1945** – Official foundation date of the UN.

#### About the United Nations

**Purpose** – Promote peace, security, human rights, and development. Serves as a global platform for international cooperation. Currently has 193 member states.

##### Main Organs –

**General Assembly (UNGA)** – Deliberative body for all members.

**Security Council (UNSC)** – Maintains peace; 5 permanent members (P5) with veto power.

**Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** – Coordinates global economic, social, and environmental policies.

**International Court of Justice (ICJ)** – Settles disputes between states.

**Secretariat** – Led by the Secretary-General; manages day-to-day operations.

#### Timeline of Key UN Reforms

**1997** – Kofi Annan proposes reform packages (“Track One” – structural, “Track Two” – management).

**2000** – Millennium Summit; adoption of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**2005** – Report “In Larger Freedom”; establishment of Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

**2006** – **Human Rights Council** replaces former UN Commission.

**2007–2016** – Ban Ki-moon’s tenure; launch of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Climate Agreement.

**2015** – Adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**2017–2020** – Antonio Guterres focuses on peace, security, and UN modernization.

#### India and the UN

**Founding Role** – Signed Declaration by the UN (1942); participated in San Francisco Conference (1945).

##### Leadership Roles –

**Decolonization** – Co-sponsored 1960 Declaration on Independence; chaired Decolonization Committee.

**Apartheid** – First country to raise the issue in 1946; supported 1965 Anti-Racial Discrimination Convention.

**Developing Nations Advocacy** – Founding member of NAM and G77.

**Peacekeeping Contributions** – Largest troop contributor; 244,500+ personnel in 49 missions since 1948. First to deploy an all-women police unit (2007, Liberia).

**UN Security Council** – India has served as non-permanent member – 1950–51, 1967–68, 1972–73, 1977–78, 1984–85, 1991–92, 2011–12, 2021–22.

## Relevance of the UN Today

**Humanitarian Impact** – Agencies like UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UNICEF provide food, shelter, and medical aid globally. Example – \$16.6 million anticipatory drought aid to Afghanistan in May 2025.

**Peacekeeping** – Maintains stability in fragile states and protects civilians.

**Normative Influence** – Establishes international norms on human rights, gender equality, disarmament, and sustainable development.

**Global Frameworks – SDGs (2015)** – 17 goals guiding inclusive, equitable, environmentally responsible growth.

## Key UN Successes

**Namibia (1990)** – Oversaw transition from South African rule.

**East Timor (1999)** – Stabilized post-separation governance.

## Need for UN Reforms

**Outdated Structure** – Founded in 1945 with 51 members; now 193.

**Inequitable Representation** – Asia, Africa, Latin America underrepresented in UNSC.

**Security Council Veto** – P5 dominance leads to paralysis on critical issues (e.g., Israel-Palestine, Ukraine).

**Slow Reforms** – Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) ongoing; India as part of G4 advocates for democratically elected permanent members.

**Economic & Developmental Asymmetries** – North-South divide; climate negotiations imbalance.

**Funding Crisis** – Chronic underfunding of agencies like WFP, UNHCR; 2025 UN budget \$3.7 billion.

## Groups Advocating UN Reform

**G4** – India, Brazil, Germany, Japan – seeks permanent UNSC membership.

**L69** – 42 developing nations advocating for broader representation.

**C-10** – African nations supporting Common African Position (CAP).

**IBSA** – India, Brazil, South Africa – aligned with G4 and L69 reforms.

## Funding of the UN

**Mandatory Contributions** – Based on member states' economic capacity; covers administrative and peacekeeping costs.

**Voluntary Contributions** – For humanitarian aid and development programs.

**Top Contributors** – US (22%) – largest donor; China (20%).

**Challenges** – Delayed payments, funding shortfalls, and politicized contributions reduce UN operational efficiency. Example – WFP faced \$500 million shortfall in Sudan (2025).

## Decision-Making in the UN

**Simple Majority** – Most resolutions.

**Two-Thirds Majority** – Membership or critical issues.

**Consensus-Based** – Some bodies like Conference on Disarmament.

**Veto Power** – P5 can block substantive resolutions, even with majority support.

**Example** – US frequently blocks Israel-critical resolutions.

## UN80 Initiative (UN Reform 2025)

**Launched by** – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

### Focus Areas –

1. Operational efficiency.
2. Mandate implementation review.
3. Strategic and structural realignment.

**Goal** – Maximize resources, improve cost-effectiveness, ensure impact amid funding constraints.

## Way Forward for UN and India's Role

1. Strengthen UNSC expansion advocacy (G4, L69, C-10).

2. Promote inclusive multilateralism and collective responsibility.
3. Enhance financial stability through sustainable funding mechanisms.
4. Reform UNGA and Secretariat for agility, meritocracy, and accountability.
5. Reclaim moral authority by consistent stances on justice, human rights, and equality.

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