



CHAPTER 14

Major Agencies of the United Nations

Syllabus

Major Agencies of the United Nations

UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO – headquarters and functions only.

The UN has several specialised agencies through which it operates. These agencies work for the social and economic development of the developing countries. Each agency has a particular agenda that it follows worldwide. The main functions of some of the important agencies are given below:

1. UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created by the UN General Assembly during its first session in 1946 to help the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe. In 1950, its programme was extended to provide long-range benefits to children of all developing countries. Later on, its name was changed to United Nations Children's Fund. However, its acronym UNICEF continued. UNICEF is governed by a 36-member Executive Board, which reviews UNICEF activities and approves its policies, country programmes and budgets.

Headquarters

The UNICEF has its headquarters in New York,



■ Logo of UNICEF

and has more than 200 offices in developing countries.

Finance

For financing its projects, the UNICEF depends on voluntary contributions made by different Governments, donations made by private agencies, sale of greeting cards and through various fund-raising campaigns. Sale of UNICEF cards is an important source of income. Worldwide sale of these cards generates funds of more than \$100 million, all of which is spent on programmes to benefit children.

Almost all the resources of UNICEF are diverted to the poorest developing countries with the largest share going to children up to the age of five. Along with WHO, UNDP and other United Nations agencies, UNICEF has achieved success in fulfilling its objectives.

Objective

The main objective of UNICEF is to look after children's welfare especially in developing countries by providing people with low cost community-based services in maternal and child health, nutrition, immunisation, etc.

Functions

UNICEF provides services in primary health-care, nutrition, basic education, sanitation and women's development in developing countries. The main functions of UNICEF are broadly divided into the following categories:

- UNICEF works for the protection of children in respect of their survival, health, and well-being. This is done in cooperation with individuals, civic groups, governments and the private sector.

- (i) It provides funds for training personnel, including health and sanitation workers, teachers and nutritionists. Universal Child Immunisation against preventable diseases was one of the leading goals of UNICEF.
- (ii) It provides technical supplies, equipment and other aids, ranging from paper for textbooks, to equipment and medicines to health clinics, to pipes and pumps for bringing clean water to villages.
- (iii) It assists governments to plan, develop and extend community-based services in the fields of maternal and child health, nutrition, clean water and sanitation.
- (iv) It provides help to children and mothers in emergencies arising from natural calamities, civil strife and epidemics.
- (v) It makes effort to prevent diseases like tuberculosis (T.B.), malaria, eye diseases, skin diseases, etc.
- (vi) UNICEF performs various other functions. As the sole agency for children, it speaks on behalf of children and upholds the Convention on the Rights of the Child and works for its implementation. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in the

year 1965 and the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace in 1989.

UNICEF Programmes in India

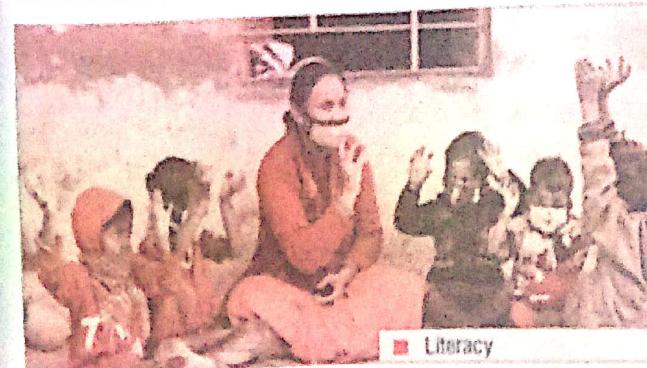
UNICEF's goal is to enable every child born in India to have the best start in life, to thrive and to develop to her or his full potential.

UNICEF has been the driving force in almost all the programmes started by the government of India for providing people with low cost community-based services in maternal and child health, nutrition, clean drinking water, sanitation and immunisation. The major programmes launched with the aid and assistance of UNICEF in India are the following:

- (i) The government of India has launched in collaboration with UNICEF — the *National Mission on Immunisation*, the *National Mission for Drinking Water* and the *National Literacy Mission*. UNICEF is committed to ensuring all children in India have access to inclusive and equitable quality education. It is working closely with the Government of India, State Governments in 17 States, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector. It is working with the Government to ensure that every child in



Clean Drinking Water



Literacy



Immunisation



Maternal Health

UNICEF Programmes

India has access to clean water and basic toilets as well as practices good hygiene behaviours.

- (ii) Community Development Programme has been started in the rural areas of India with UNICEF's assistance, aimed at maternal and child health.
- (iii) The government's efforts to reduce infant and child mortality due to diarrhoeal diseases were supported by UNICEF for the production of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT). Since 1986, ORT has become a full-fledged national programme.
- (iv) UNICEF is a partner of the Indian government in the accelerated rural water supply programme.
- (v) Since the 1990s, the government of India, UNICEF and other UN agencies have been working together for the promotion of iodised salt as the best way of preventing iodine deficiency disorders.
- (vi) UNICEF seeks to advance the fulfilment of the rights of all women and children in India to survival, development, participation and protection by reducing social inequalities based on gender, caste, ethnicity or region.

2. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations specialised agency for health. It was established on April 7, 1948 when 26 members of the United Nations ratified its Constitution. April 7 is celebrated as the World Health Day every year.



■ Logo of WHO

Objective
WHO's objective is the attainment of the highest possible level of health by all people. Health is defined in WHO's Constitution as a state of complete well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Headquarters

The headquarters of the WHO is in Geneva, Switzerland.

Functions

- The WHO performs the following functions:
- (i) It helps countries to improve their health system by building up infrastructure especially manpower, institutions and services for the individual and community.
 - (ii) It gives important drugs needed for medical care. The WHO launched a programme to immunise children against six major

Achievements of WHO

According to World Health Statistics (2023) given by WHO, the following are the achievements of WHO:

- Elimination of diseases in many countries of the world like Malaria in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, and near-elimination of Hepatitis C in Egypt.
- Contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic by raising over \$200 million through its Solidarity Response Fund to combat COVID-19 crisis. In 2023, WHO declared COVID-19 over as a global health emergency.
- WHO helped people in different countries of the world when disasters struck be it earthquakes, floods, heat waves, wildfires, droughts and more.
- The WHO has recommended new vaccines for malaria, dengue and meningitis.
- Globally, smoking rates have fallen.
- Since 2019, it has brought community mental health services to 50 million people.
- Strong progress on HPV vaccination for the elimination of cervical cancer.
- Globally, a reduction of 40 per cent in cases of under-nutrition among children.
- Child mortality under the age of five years has declined from 90 deaths per 1000 live births to 46 deaths per 1000 live births.
- Globally, 1.3 million fewer new cases of HIV were reported from 2001 to 2013.
- Diarrhoeal deaths have reduced significantly.
- Cholera and plague epidemics are rare occurrences now.
- Leprosy is being managed better and the guinea worm has been nearly eliminated.
- Smallpox has been eradicated.
- India has been declared 'Polio Free' country by the WHO.
- India launched an initiative to screen and place 75 million people with hypertension or diabetes on standard care.

- (iii) It promotes research to cure and prevent diseases. For example, it arranged for the investigation of cancer and heart diseases in laboratories in many countries to identify disease-causing organisms, to improve vaccines and to train research workers.
- (iv) It works towards providing safe drinking water and adequate waste disposal. The decade 1981-1990 was declared as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.
- (v) It organises conferences, seminars and training for health care personnel from different countries.
- (vi) It aims at fighting diseases and preventing them from spreading. Malaria eradication programme continues to be the world's biggest health programme.
- (vii) It defines standards for the strength and purity of medicines including biological products.
- (viii) It makes special efforts in combating diarrhoeal diseases which are known as killers of infants and young children.
- (ix) It publishes health journals like the 'Bulletin of the World Health Organization' and

'Public Health Panorama' to create health consciousness among people.

3. UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

A conference was held at London in November 1945, for the establishment of an educational, scientific and cultural organisation. This led to the establishment of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific And Cultural Organisation) on 4th November 1946.



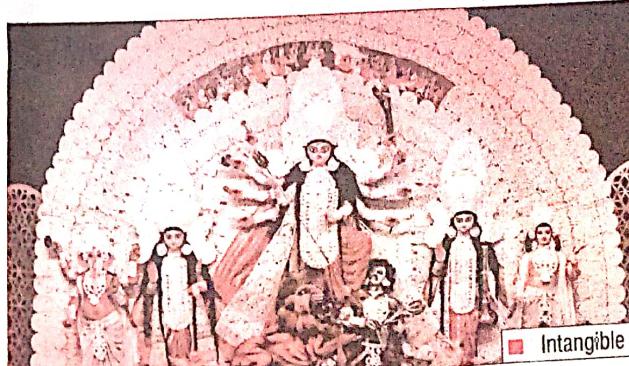
■ Logo of UNESCO

Objectives and Headquarters

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication. This is undertaken to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights of all human beings. The headquarters of the UNESCO is in Paris.

Functions

Education: The largest sector of UNESCO's



■ Intangible Cultural Heritage



■ Education



■ Scientific Activities

Functions of UNESCO

activity is in the field of education. The main functions of the UNESCO in the field of education are:

- (i) Removal of illiteracy by encouragement to adult education, distance-education and the open school system.
- (ii) Emphasis on education of women and girls.
- (iii) Financial assistance for the education of disabled children.
- (iv) Provision of grants and fellowships to teachers and scholars, organisation of library systems, and promotion of international understanding through education.
- (v) Organisation of book fairs and festivals at international and national levels. Here is an example: Development of library system is an important component of continuing education. Delhi Public Library established in 1951 with financial assistance from UNESCO has developed into a big metropolitan public library system.
- (vi) Encouragement of science education by providing regional training centres.
- (vii) Promotion of education as an instrument for international understanding.

Scientific activities: The scientific activities undertaken by the UNESCO are:

- (i) UNESCO organises seminars and conferences of scientists of various countries and circulates information through journals, press and exhibitions. 'Courier' is the official monthly magazine of UNESCO. Its Hindi and Tamil editions are available in India.
- (ii) It promotes basic research in fields like geology, mathematics, physics and oceanography. As a result, it finances engineering and technology schemes in a number of developing countries.
- (iii) It helps in correcting the imbalance in scientific and technological manpower that exists, because 90 per cent of trained manpower is concentrated in the industrialised countries.
- (iv) It encourages the study of social sciences in order to focus attention on combating

all forms of discrimination, improving the status of women and helping the youth in solving their problems.

Communication: UNESCO develops communication for dissemination of information.

- (i) It has set up regional networks, trained technicians and deals with both hardware and software aspects of informatics.
- (ii) It improves the quality of the Press, the films and video services.
- (iii) It assists developing countries to develop communication.
- (iv) It upholds the freedom of the press and independence of the media.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage: It encourages modernisation without the loss of cultural identity and diversity.

- (i) **WORLD HERITAGE LIST:** UNESCO provides technical advice and assistance, equipment and funds for the preservation of monuments and other works of art. It has prepared a *World Heritage List* to identify the monuments and sites which are to be protected.
- (ii) **MANUSCRIPTS:** It aims to protect the world inheritance of books, works of art and rare manuscripts.
- (iii) **INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH):** UNESCO gives ICH tag to give recognition

The UNESCO'S Intangible Cultural Heritage elements of India include *Sankirtana*, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur; *Durga Puja* in Kolkata; *Kumbh Mela*; *Yoga*; *Nowruz*; *Traditional brass and copper craft* of utensil making among the Thatheras (beaters) of Jandiala Guru (Punjab); *Buddhist chanting* of Ladakh; *Chhau dance*; *Kalbelia folk songs and dances* of Rajasthan; *Kutiyattam*, Sanskrit theatre, one of the oldest living theatrical traditions; *Mudiyettu* ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala; *Ramman*, the religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas; Tradition of *Vedic Chanting* and *Ramlila* the traditional performance of the Ramayana. *Garba* of Gujarat was included in this list in 2023.

to cultural practices, traditions and skills that are passed down through generations. It includes—oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and skills about nature and universe, traditional crafts and contemporary rural and urban practices.

The ICH tag helps to preserve cultural diversity, strengthen social cohesion and help the communities to maintain a connection with their cultural history.

- (iv) **ART:** It gives encouragement to artistic creations in literature and fine arts.
- (v) **FILMS:** It pays attention towards the cultural development through the medium of films.
- (vi) **TRAVEL GRANTS:** It sends cultural missions to different countries so that there would be development of contacts which may promote peace and prosperity. In the past it has provided travel grants to writers and artists under a project named Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values. Under this scheme, India's

talented exponents of classical music and dance travelled to Europe and America.

India's Association with UNESCO

India has been a member of the UNESCO since its inception in 1946. In 1949, the Government of India set up a National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO consisting of five Sub-Commissions, namely Education, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Culture and Communication. These Commissions promote UNESCO programmes and send personnel to participate in international conferences, seminars and workshops organised by UNESCO. The UNESCO provides funds and expertise for the protection of many historical monuments and sites like the Taj Mahal. In July 2022, India was elected to the Intergovernmental Committee for the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage for a period of four years. This provided India an opportunity to play an important role in preserving the intangible cultural heritage worldwide.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE ➤➤➤

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): (i) UNICEF was created by the UN General Assembly in 1946 to help the emergency needs of children, with its Headquarters at New York; (ii) The main objective of UNICEF is to look after children's welfare especially in developing countries by providing them with low cost community-based services in maternal and child-health, nutrition and immunization, etc.

World Health Organization (WHO): (i) WHO was established on April 7, 1948. Its headquarters is at Geneva in Switzerland; (ii) WHO aims at the attainment of physical, mental and social well-being of the people; The main functions of WHO are to direct and coordinate health work on an international scale, to eradicate disease and to promote the provision of good health and living conditions to the people.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): (i) UNESCO was established on November 4, 1946. Its headquarters is in Paris; (ii) The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by fostering cooperation among nations through education, science and cultural development.

EXERCISES

I. Multiple-Choice Questions

A. Select the correct option.

1. UNICEF is governed by an Executive Board consisting of _____ members.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> (a) 34 | <input type="radio"/> (b) 36 | <input type="radio"/> (c) 32 |
| <input type="radio"/> (d) 38 | | |

2. Where is the Headquarters of the UNICEF located?
- (a) New York, USA (b) Washington, USA
(c) Florida, USA (d) New Jersey, USA
3. To finance its projects UNICEF depends on
- (a) voluntary contribution by governments;
(b) donations by private agencies;
(c) sale of Greetings cards;
(d) All of the above.
4. The main focus of UNICEF is _____.
- (a) Healthcare (b) Education
(c) Children's welfare (d) Communication
5. When is the World Health Day celebrated?
- (a) April 14 (b) April 17 (c) April 8 (d) April 7
6. Where is the headquarters of WHO located?
- (a) New York, USA (b) Geneva, Switzerland
(c) Paris, France (d) Bern, Switzerland
7. Which of the following diseases was not a part of programme to immunise children by WHO?
- (a) Polio (b) Tetanus (c) Whooping cough (d) Malaria
8. Where was the conference held for the establishment of UNESCO?
- (a) Paris (b) Geneva (c) London (d) New York
9. Where is the Headquarters of UNESCO located?
- (a) Bern (b) Geneva (c) Hague (d) Paris
10. The largest sector of UNESCO's activity is in the field of:
- (a) Education (b) Science (c) Culture (d) Health
11. Which of the following is NOT a function of UNESCO?
- (a) Scientific Activities (b) Communication
(c) Preservation of Cultural Heritage (d) Research in Mythology
12. In a remote village in Rwanda the infant mortality rate is one in every ten live births. Which agency of the UN could help this village?
- (a) UNICEF (b) WHO (c) UNESCO (d) None of the above
13. Which of the following is NOT a World Heritage Site?
- (a) The Taj Mahal (b) Ajanta Caves
(c) Delhi Public Library (d) Agra Fort
14. Which of the following does not have Intangible Cultural Heritage Tag?
- (a) Garba (b) Durga Puja (c) Ramlila (d) Kathak

15. Your school is organising a handicrafts fair. You have gone to a village to seek craftsmen to participate in the fair. You realise that the village is facing a total lack of potable water. Besides the local government who else could help you?

- (a) WHO (b) UNESCO (c) UNICEF (d) Your school

B. Select the option that shows the correct relationship between Statements (I) and (II).

1. (I) The United Nations Children's Fund's main objective is to look after children's welfare especially in developing countries.

(II) UNICEF is a partner of the Indian government in the rural water supply programme.

- (a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

2. (I) WHO's objective is to attain the highest possible level of health by all people.

(II) WHO developed a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 pandemic and shipped it to over 100 countries.

- (a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

3. (I) The largest sector of UNESCO's activity is in the field of education.

(II) The main function of the UNESCO is to identify the monuments in different parts of the world and declare them as World Heritage sites.

- (a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

4. (I) Delhi Public Library was established in 1951 with financial assistance from UNESCO.

(II) UNESCO provides grants for organisation of library systems and promotion of international understanding through education.

- (a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

5. (I) UNESCO lays emphasis on education of women and children.

(II) UNESCO upholds the freedom of the Press and independence of the media.

- (a) (II) contradicts (I) (b) (II) is the reason for (I)
(c) (I) is true but (II) is false (d) (I) and (II) are independent of each other.

II. Short Answer Questions

- Give the full form of these agencies of the UN: WHO and UNICEF. In which type of countries do the above agencies of UN work?
- Which agency of the UN looks after the interest of the children in the world? What was the original purpose of setting up this agency?
- How does UNICEF raise its funds?
- Where is the headquarters of UNICEF? Name two preventable diseases against which UNICEF organises its programmes.
- Mention some of the UNICEF programmes followed in India.
- What is the role of UNICEF in modern times?
- Why was UNESCO established? Where is its headquarters located?

III. Structured Questions

1. The United Nations apart from its main organs also works through its allied agencies. In this context, answer the following questions:
- Write the expanded form of UNESCO. Mention two of its functions in the field of education.
 - Explain three vital roles that the WHO plays in combating diseases.
 - Mention any two functions of the UNICEF.
2. With reference to UNESCO, answer the following questions:
- What were the objectives of the formation of UNESCO?
 - How is the development of education, science and culture related to peace?
 - What efforts have been made by UNESCO to preserve cultural heritage?
3. Study the picture and answer the following questions:
- Identify the organisation associated with the given emblem. Where is its headquarters located? Name two sources from where this organisation gets its funds.
 - What is the main objective of this organisation? State any two functions of this organisation.
 - Mention any two achievements of this organisation.
4. Study the emblem and answer the following questions:
- Name the organisation associated with the emblem.
 - Mention any three functions of the organisation named by you.
 - Mention any two programmes of this organisation in India.



IV. Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

- Do you think that the major agencies of the United Nations have lived up to the agenda for which they were created? Give reasons to support your answer.
- If you were given a choice to work for any one of the major agencies of the UN, which one will you choose and why?

