



Learning Outcomes

The learner:

- describes and understands the aims and principles of the United Nations (UN).
- identifies the organs of the UN.
- discusses the composition of the General Assembly, Security Council and the International Court of Justice.

Warm Up!

- When and under what circumstances did the Second World War come to an end?
- Name some specialized bodies of the United Nations.

AFTERMATH OF WARS

The 20th century witnessed two world wars that convulsed humanity in a gory bloodbath. They killed millions of people, left millions maimed and crippled and brought in its wake devastation, destruction, desolation and despair on a scale beyond imagination.

The horror and tragedy of the **First World War** led to a passionate and universal desire for peace. Out of this desire was born an international organization called the **League of Nations**, in 1920.

The League of Nations failed to maintain peace and the **Second World War** broke out in **1939**. The terrifying magnitude and scale of destruction in this war, created in the minds of the people a **revulsion** for war and its tragic consequences. Once again, people yearned for an enduring peace, and even as the bombs rained down from the skies, the idea of the United Nations Organization took shape.

THE ATLANTIC CHARTER

Winston Churchill, the former Prime Minister of Great Britain and Franklin D. Roosevelt, the former President of the United States of America, met aboard a battleship, off Newfoundland, in the Atlantic Ocean. They signed a document called the **Atlantic Charter** on 14 August 1941. The Charter was based on the principles of mutual respect and cooperation among nations and peaceful resolution of all disputes.



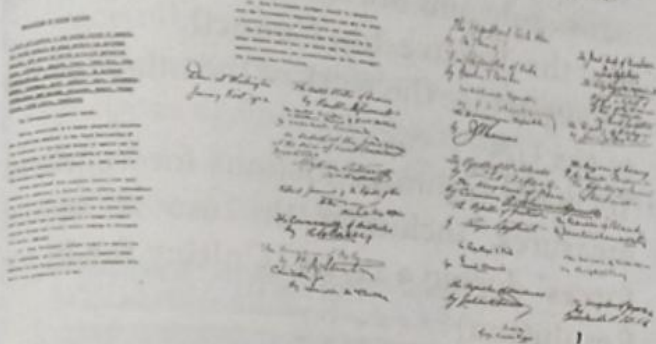
The Atlantic Charter meeting

It was also agreed that when the war ended, every human being must be guaranteed the **basic rights** or the **four freedoms**.

The basic rights included:

- freedom from **want**
- freedom of **speech**
- freedom of **religious belief**
- freedom from **fear**

DECLARATION BY UNITED NATIONS



The Atlantic Charter

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

In June 1945, 50 nations met in San Francisco to sign the Charter of the UN. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 member states. On 24 October 1945, the United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights. **24 October** is celebrated as **United Nations Day**.

The **original signatories** included **Britain, France, USA, former USSR** and **China**. Today,



The United Nations headquarters in New York City, USA

there are 193 members. The **headquarters** are located in **New York City**.

The six official languages of the UN are English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. The **UN flag** depicts two bent olive branches which are open at the top with a world map between them. The **white olive branches** and the world map are on a light blue background. The branches of the wreath symbolize **peace**.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UN

The objectives of the UN have been outlined in the Preamble of the UN Charter. They are:

- To maintain **international peace and security**
- To develop **friendly relations** among nations on the basis of equality
- To achieve **international cooperation** in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems
- To promote **human rights** and **fundamental freedom** for the people of the world
- To act as a **common platform** for harmonizing the activities of various nations for the attainment of the objectives of the UN
- To **save** succeeding generations from the **scourge of war**, which has twice brought suffering to humans



The UN logo

This implies that every nation must abide by the following **principles**:

- All nations big or small are equal.
- They must all obey the Charter.
- All disputes must be settled peacefully.
- No force should be used.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The United Nations has been responsible for maintaining peace and justice in many countries since its inception in 1945. It does so by settling disputes between different nations, and negotiating peace between them. Name some ways in which the United Nations has helped in maintaining peace in recent times?

Discuss

TP

If you were asked to select any four UN objectives that you consider most important, which would you choose and why?

THE ORGANS OF THE UN

The UN has six main organs:

- The **General Assembly**
- The **Security Council**
- The **Economic and Social Council**
- The **Trusteeship Council**
- The **International Court of Justice**
- The **Secretariat**

Did You Know?

The United Nations headquarters consists of several buildings along the East River in New York City. On the grounds of the UN headquarters stands the sculpture, 'Let us beat swords into ploughshares', sculpted by the Russian sculptor, Yevgeny Vuchetich and it expresses the main goal of the UN.