

**UNITED NATIONS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract**

The UN and its affiliated organisations play an important role in promoting global cooperation in the economic and social spheres. The UN believed that global economic and social progress was required for long-term peace. As a result, a significant portion of UN funding is directed towards social and economic initiatives. Since 1960, the primary focus of the United Nations has been on the economic and social development of newly independent developing countries. Numerous initiatives are being launched in these areas to address issues such as food insecurity, housing instability, and illness, all of which have economic and social ramifications. The United Nations Economic and Social Council is an organisation comprised of some of the United Nations' member states that assists the General Assembly in international economic and social cooperation and development programmes. This council works to make international peace more effective by addressing social issues. According to this, the only way to achieve global peace is not through political means. It was founded in 1945. This council began with only 18 members. By amending the UN Charter in 1965, the number of its members was increased to 27, and in 1971, the number of members was increased to 54. Each member serves a three-year term. Every year, one-third of the members are relieved, resulting in 18 new members. A relieved member may be re-elected as well. The United Nations believed that stable peace could not be achieved unless all nations invested in economic and social development.

**Keywords:** United Nations, General Assembly, Cooperation, Development, Piece

## **Introduction**

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established to highlight the idea that long-term peace and security require not only political and military stability but also a good level of living throughout the world. Economic and social improvement and development are also necessary, as well as level and full employment. Alberti, A. (2005)

The purpose of ECOSOC is to promote the stability and wellbeing necessary for nations to interact peacefully and amicably. It aims to address global economic, social, health, and other humanitarian problems while also advancing and defending fundamental freedoms and human rights. Coordinating the efforts of specialized agencies working in a variety of disciplines to better the socioeconomic conditions of people all over the world is the primary task of those acting under the authority of the General Assembly.

Among ECOSOC's responsibilities include research, reporting, and recommendations to the General Assembly on global economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related issues. Its jurisdiction has allowed for the establishment of numerous regional and executive commissions, the most significant of which are the Commissions on the Status of Women, Asia and the Far East, Population, Economic, Employment, and Development, and Human Rights. Both the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Economic Commission for Latin America. Browne, S. (2012).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' fundamental objectives, ending poverty and reducing inequality, continue to present difficult obstacles for the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite the fact that the area has made great advancements, there have been setbacks recently, notably with regard to levels of extreme poverty. Particularly in light of the current global environment, which is characterized by trade tensions between the United States and China and climate change, this situation should raise alarm bells. Low regional economic growth and significant demographic and labor market changes have exacerbated structural issues like low productivity, high levels of inequality, social exclusion, and environmental neglect.

In light of this, it is commendable that the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean have made the decision to strengthen their commitment to achieving the SDGs by developing a

Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. This initiative aims to foster cooperation and achieve concrete outcomes in relation to the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda. The Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development's axes and lines of action are a reflection of the value that the region's nations place on multilateralism and cooperation in order to have top-notch public policies based on human rights, which are the cornerstones of the UN.

### **Functions and Powers of the United Nations Economic and Social Council**

The functions and powers of the ECOSOC, the functions and powers of the United Nations Economic and Social Council are as follows:

- To serve as a focal point for debate on global and multidisciplinary international economic and social issues, and to make policy recommendations to Member States and the entire UN system on such issues.
- To research, write about, and make recommendations on global economic, social, cultural, and educational issues.
- To promote and keep track of adherence to basic liberties and rights for everybody.
- To convene an international conference and prepare a draft agreement on the matters falling under its purview and present it to the General Assembly.
- Defining the relationship of specific agencies with the United Nations and entering into agreements with them.
- To coordinate the work of specialized agencies in consultation and suggestion with the members of the General Assembly and the United Nations.
- To render services to the members of the United Nations upon the approval of the General Assembly or at the request of specific agencies.
- To consult NGOs on the matters which the Council manages.

### **Major UN Initiatives for Socio-Economic Development**

Countries are often categorized as developed or developing depending on the size and strength of their economies. North America and all of Europe are home to the developed nations, which are located north of the equator. Several nations (including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and others) have developed industrially, high per capita incomes, as well as improvements in health care and education, among other things. They are

in charge of world commerce. From two-thirds to three-quarters of people on earth reside in developing nations. Famine, sickness, and widespread poverty are prevalent in the world's developing nations, which are found in Africa, Asia, and South America. FAO, F. (2018). These 130 developing countries are home to three-fourths of the world's population, but average individual incomes are extremely low. For generations, they were subject to colonial rule. The colonial rulers gave no thought to the economic and industrial development of these colonies' people. They exploited developing countries' natural resources for financial gain. Kedzia, Z. (2009).

Many of the colonies attained independence and joined the UN starting in 1960. When their UN majority grew, they were able to create additional agencies. The First Development Decade was started by the United Nations. International organizations including the International Development Association, the United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization were founded in the 1960s.

by means of developing nations' initiative In order to advance international commerce for developing nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964. It has benefited emerging nations in many different ways.

Several initiatives to boost trade and economic cooperation between developing nations at the regional and sub-regional levels have received major backing from UNCTAD. Also, it has promoted technical assistance. A group of developing nations was established within UNCTAD. 132 nations are now included in this group. In talks with wealthy nations on trade and economic issues, it has pushed for collaboration and solidarity among developing countries. As an illustration, it put more pressure on poor nations to demand stable prices for fundamental goods like cotton and coffee that are exported to developed-country markets.

Even further questions about the unfair global economic system were raised by the UN General Assembly and UNCTAD. In order to safeguard the economic interests of developing nations, the United Nations called for the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974. This appeal was founded on the principles of equity and justice for all nations, rich and poor.

The United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at a summit that year. The eradication of severe poverty, the completion of universal primary education, the enhancement of maternal health, and the decrease in infant mortality are a few of these objectives. The development goals were unanimously agreed by all UN Member States and set standards for assessing development progress by addressing several global issues by the year 2015, including poverty and lack of access to healthcare and education.

### **Network of UN Development Agencies**

The United Nations has a complex and decentralized system for planning, coordinating, managing, and carrying out its economic and social programs. The Economic and Social Council and General Assembly are at the very top of the organizational pyramid (ECOSOC). All societal and economic activity is governed and directed by the General Assembly. Functional commissions have assisted ECOSOC in its operations, and it is solely focused on this job. The Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Social Development, and the Commission on Narcotic Substances are a few of them. Mertus, J. A., & Mertus, J. (2010).

Regional economic commissions are another option, and they concentrate on problems unique to their own regions. The five commissions are the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Oestreich, J. E. (2014).

The United Nations has specialized organizations. These organizations are considered to as autonomous organizations while being a part of the UN system since they function separately from UN authorities. Every organization has its own headquarters, bylaws, staff, and financial resources. Like the United Nations, each was founded as a result of an international conference. The UN does not require membership to be a member of these specialized organizations. These groups welcome everyone to join. It is possible for members of specialized agencies to join the UN as non-member nations. An agreement between the agency and the UN or a treaty with another nation forms an intergovernmental body known as a specialized agency. The General

Assembly will then need to endorse the deal that was agreed between the agency and ECOSOC.

### **Development Assistance Activities**

The UNDP was founded in 1965 and is the top development organization in the UN system. Working with UNDP is more convenient for developing countries. Even if UNDP cannot provide financial assistance, it can help poor countries by organizing training programmes, sending technical experts, and other means. It spent more than \$40 billion on all of its initiatives combined.

### **Some of the ongoing projects undertaken**

One of the key focuses of the UNDP country program is the promotion of gender equality. In order to promote long-term human development, the UNDP Food Security Programme in India has tackled the feminization of agriculture and women's empowerment. The UNDP announced the creation of a new UNDP Democratic Governance Trust Fund in May 2001. This fund would be used to start initiatives in the least developed nations targeted at enhancing parliamentary systems, averting violence, and fostering peace. Despite India's 50-year independence, the majority of people living in slums in both rural and urban areas remain uninsured by the country's health-care system. The UNDP is supporting this initiative. Singh, J. P. (2010).

### **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

The only goal of UNICEF is to make impoverished children's lives better. To advance child welfare, UNICEF has worked on projects in the fields of health, education, eradicating malaria, nutrition, rural development, family and child welfare, and emergency aid. In 1965, UNICEF received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its social and humanitarian efforts. India is given a lot of attention. S. Sankaran, R. Müller, and N. Drouin (2020).

UNICEF identified the problem of excessive flouride in groundwater resources and has made significant contributions to a better environment for children in India. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have been the most severely affected. Immunization is a critical WHO initiative for the Polio Eradication Program. Polio was the first disease to be eradicated in the twenty-first

century. Another significant UN health agency initiative is the WHO's campaign against tobacco use, particularly in developing countries.

### **The World Bank Group**

Some of the UN agencies' development programmes, which were discussed in the previous section, involve significant financial investments. For example, UNDP's annual budget of over \$670 million dollars is dedicated solely to development assistance. Capital is the most important component of development. Svenson, N. (2015).

The International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) are the two most significant financial organizations of the United Nations (IMF). Because they were created at the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, USA, in December 1945, these organizations are occasionally referred to as the Bretton Woods institutions. To help governments deal with balance-of-payments imbalances, the IMF offers short-term loans to those governments.

The main multilateral source of finance for infrastructure development projects is the World Bank Group. To present, funding for development initiatives has totalled around \$300 billion. Nonetheless, there is a lot of criticism to the World Bank and the IMF. Wealthy countries control them. Additionally, the UN has no jurisdiction over them. They are not democratically governed. Voting in these organizations is not subject to the General Assembly's one-vote-per-nation restriction. A member nation's number of votes is weighted, meaning it depends on how much it contributes financially or has an interest in these organizations. Significant sources of multilateral development financing include regional development banks like the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which have contributed significantly to the funding of hundreds of projects in their respective regions. Weiss, T. G. (2010).

### **Conclusion**

The ongoing improvement of pre-existing behavioural patterns, emotions, attitudes toward others, and comprehension of others is referred to as social growth. The purpose of the UN, as stated in the Preamble of the UN Charter, is to "employ international machinery to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples." Several programs have been started by the



UN to maintain international peace and security while also promoting the economic and social development of underdeveloped nations. Many initiatives and programs aiming at advancing economic and social development are coordinated by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the UN Secretariat. Multilateral support for resolving development-related concerns is mostly provided through the United Nations. Fundraising, donations, and help are provided for development initiatives and programs by a number of United Nations development organizations, including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank.

Government that is effective and responsive improves the lives of the populace. They will have more faith in their government when members of all social groups are involved in making decisions that have an impact on their lives and when they have equal access to fair institutions that administer justice and deliver services. The foundation for societal well-being and economic success is a healthy ecology, which is at the center of development. Through nature-based solutions, such as the sustainable management and protection of land, rivers, and oceans, we help ensure that nations have enough food and water, are resilient to climate change and disasters, transition to green economic pathways, and can sustain work for billions of people through forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism.

UNDP is the main actor on climate change in the UN, having been a longtime partner of the Global Environment Facility and currently holding the second-largest Green Climate Fund portfolio. Our goal is to assist in integrating the Paris Agreement and all other environmental agreements into the top priority for international development. Doing this right will ensure that billions of people have access to food, shelter, clean air, education, and opportunity.

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