



What the United Nations IS

- An association of sovereign member states formed in 1945 after World War II.
- A group including nearly every nation on earth, which expanded from 51 original members to 193.
- An organization composed of 6 main bodies:
 1. **General Assembly** - the UN's principal deliberative body, where each nation has one vote
 2. **Security Council** - charged with maintaining international peace and security, where the US and 4 other permanent members have a veto
 3. **Economic and Social Council** - which coordinates the UN's economic and social work through Commissions such as the Human Rights Council or Commission on Science and Technology for Development
 4. **Trusteeship Council** - which originally was given jurisdiction over 11 former colonies (all now independent nations)
 5. **International Court of Justice** - which is the judicial organ of the UN and decides disputes between states that accept its jurisdiction
 6. **Secretariat** - the international civil service that carries out the decisions of the other bodies
- What we refer to as the UN System is made up of:
 - The 6 bodies listed above
 - Their subsidiary bodies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 - A group of "specialized agencies" such as the World Health Organization and global financial institutions, which include the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and the International Monetary Fund
 - Two other autonomous UN-related bodies: the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization

What the United Nations IS NOT

- A world government
- A military force. Member states voluntarily contribute soldiers for peacekeeping mission. The US, as a permanent member of the Security Council, can veto any proposed peacekeeping mission, thereby calling it off entirely.
- Able to legislate, levy taxes, or borrow money. The UN has only the authority and resources provided to it by its members.

The US role in the United Nations

- *US President Franklin D. Roosevelt* led the move to establish this world organization (it was he who dubbed it the United Nations) to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."
- The *US Senate* voted overwhelmingly for US membership in the UN
- The *US Congress* voted unanimously to invite the UN to locate its headquarters in the US
- Americans head a number of important UN agencies and hold more jobs in the UN Secretariat than any other national group
- As the world's leading economic and military power, the UN's major financial contributor and host country, and a permanent member of the Security Council, the US is in a unique position to further its interests through the UN.

For more information on the UN and on Americans working to strengthen the US relationship with the UN, contact the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) at www.unausa.org