

The United Nations Origin, Structure and Activities: An Overview

Prof. Bajrang Bali

Assistant Professor of History, SKNG Government First Grade College, Gangavathi,
Dist: Koppal, Karnataka State

ABSTRACT

The paper enhances to promote peace, security, and cooperation among state members and to foster human rights and social progress. The paper highlights the UN, comprises six main parts: 1) the Security Council, 2) the General Assembly, 3) the Economic and Social Council, 4) the International Court of Justice, 5) the Trusteeship Council, and 6) the Secretariat. The Security Council with its 5 permanent members and 10 elected members has the most important responsibility for maintaining international security and peace. The UN has a very important role in issues that are at the international level such as climate change, health crisis, humanitarian aid, and international relations. UN serves and introspect humanity in the 21st century.

Keywords: International, Organization, Security, Peace, Conference, Cooperation and Maintenance

INTRODUCTION

The UNO (United Nations Organization) is the offshoot of the Second World War which was more horrible than the World War First. In 1941 the President of USA emphasized the importance of some world body to fulfill the basic necessities of mankind: (i) right to freedom of speech and expression, (ii) freedom to worship, (iii) abolition of poverty, (iv) freedom from fear. The United Nations (UN) is a global organization. 193 countries are a member of the UN and aim to maintain international peace and security. The main principle of the UN is to prevent wars, promote social progress, and encourage respect for human rights, sovereign equality and non-interference.

President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill basing themselves on these four assumptions issued a charter of Rights and it is called 'The Atlantic Charter'. This charter welcomed the right of independence of states also. Defeat of the Nazis and the fascists invoked the need to have some world organization for international policing. "At the subsequent meeting of the Inter-Allied Council in London on 24 September 1941, the eight governments in exile of countries under Axis occupation, together with the Soviet Union and representatives of the Free French Forces, unanimously adopted adherence to the common principles of policy set forth by Britain and the United States" (Lauren, Paul Gordon 2011:140) Victors felt the need of a world body because they too had been bruised like the totally vanquished nations.

In 1943 foreign ministers of USA, Britain, Russia and China met at Moscow and issued 'The Moscow Declaration'. It said- we recognize the necessity of establishing at the earliest practical date, a General International Organization based on the principle of sovereign equality of the peace-loving states and open to membership to all such states large and small for the maintenance of international peace and security. Between 1940-1945 discussions were held and conferences followed. At last the United Nations Conference was held at San Francisco from April 26 to June 25, 1945. It adopted Charter which was signed by delegates of 51 nations. The UNO actually saw its dawn on October 24, 1945. "The new international organization was formulated and negotiated amongst the delegations from the Allied Big Four at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference from 21 September to 7 October 1944. They agreed on proposals for the aims, structure and functioning of the new organization" (Bohlen, C.E. (1973:159)

The preamble of the charter of the UN depicts the hopes and aspirations of the people of the member countries. Wars have brought untold miseries. They have brought a stigma on the people who called themselves civilized. Thus the main purpose of the UN was to give hopes to the war-stricken people and the depressed for a better future. It came into being to give a death blow to the scourge of war once for all and let humanity march forward on the path of progress and prosperity. "G. J. Eddy Gouraige argues that UN resolutions from 1946 to 1960 made decolonization a top priority, and gave the General Assembly tools to end colonialism. Nearly all the main colonies of the British French and Dutch empires gained

independence by the 1960s. However, critics complained that the UN did little to end Portuguese colonization” (G. J. Eddy Gouraige (1974:16)

Preamble: We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect and obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

And for these ends to practice tolerance, and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to invite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of the principles, and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interests, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. “Though the UN Charter had been written primarily to prevent aggression by one nation against another, in the early 1990s the UN faced several simultaneous, serious crises within Somalia, Haiti, Mozambique, and the nations that previously made up Yugoslavia” (Kennedy 2007:66)

It is resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims. Accordingly, our respective governments, through their representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as United Nations. “Central to the organization is five principal organs established by the UN Charter: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the UN Secretariat. A sixth principal organ, the Trusteeship Council, suspended its operations on 1 November 1994 upon the independence of Palau; the last remaining UN trustee territory” (Fasulo 2004:3- 8)

Aims of UNO: The UNO charter has 111 short articles, prefaced by a preamble, which sets forth the aim of the UNO. Its basic aims are: 1) To safeguard succeeding generations from the Scourge of war 2) To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights 3) To establish justice and respect for international obligations 4) To promote social progress and better standards of life

These aims can be classified: 1) To maintain international peace and security 2) To develop and enhance friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self determination of people 3) To achieve international cooperation for solving international problems of economic, social and humanitarian character 4) To promote and encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without any distinction to race, sex, language or region 5) To act as a centre for harmonizing the actions of world nations in the achievement of agreed common ends.

To achieve those aims certain principles must be adhered to. These principles are in Article 2: 1) The body is based on the principle of sovereign equality of all its members 2) All the members are to fulfill the obligations stated by the charter 3) International disputes are to be settled thro’ peaceful means 4) Member-states must refrain from the use of force 5) The body is not to intervene in the domestic affairs of a state 6) Action taken by the body in accordance with the UN charter must be assisted by the members 7) All member-states must give free help to the body in any action taken according to the charter 8) Members must act according to UN’s principles to create international peace and security.

Membership of the UNO: Membership is open to all peace-loving states that are ready to accept the obligations of UN charter and are willing to follow them in letter and spirit and in practice. New members are admitted by two-thirds vote in the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. An aggressive state can be suspended from the enjoyment of all its rights and privileges. The state which has violated the principles of the UNO charter can be expelled by the General Assembly. Membership can be restored by the Security Council when justified.

Languages of the UNO: The official languages are English, Chinese, Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish. English and French are the working languages for the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat. For the Security Council they are Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Principal Organs: 1) The General Assembly 2) The Security Council 3) The Economic and Social Council 4) The International Court of Justice 5) The Trusteeship Council 6) The Secretariat. Subsidiary organs can be established whenever there arises a need.

Human body has many diverse organs. All are important and indispensable. Still we consider the heart and the head as the most important organs. All the organs of the UNO are important, still the Security Council is considered to be the most

important organ. It has the primary responsibility of the maintenance of international peace and security. It consists of 15 members, five of which are permanent members-China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America. Non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for a two-year term. They are not eligible for two consecutive terms.

The Security Council frequently meets; one meeting is must in one month. Members preside over turn by turn. The concurrence of permanent members is important for all vital decisions of the Security Council. Decisions require the nod of nine members including the five permanent. No member can cast his vote in a matter with which he is personally connected. Any member-state can be invited to take part in the proceedings of this body but it is not entitled to vote.

Its Functions: 1) Admission or expulsion of members can only be done on the recommendation of the Security Council 2) It recommends to the General Assembly appointment of the General Secretary 3) It can take any measure to maintain or restore international peace 4) It can ask member-states to cast off economic or diplomatic relations with the erring member-state 5) It can take even military action when the erring member is adamant not to respect its decisions 6) It can call upon members to assist it militarily or with other facilities to meet an emergency 7) It can ask the contesting parties to solve their disputes amicably through negotiation or mediation 8) It along with the General Assembly, elects judges to the International Court of Justice.

Role played by the UNO is very sensitive and it is both political and nonpolitical. Its nonpolitical role aims at creating better economic, social and intellectual conditions in the world. It makes efforts to eliminate poverty, disease and illiteracy and to promote an atmosphere where human freedom and fundamental rights are respected and enhanced. It is assisted by various commissions and committees in this task: 1) International Labour Organization 2) WHO (World Health Organization) 3) UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) 4) Food and Agricultural Organization 5) IMF (International Monetary Fund) 6) International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 7) International Civil Aviation Organization 8) Universal Postal Union 9) International Telecommunication Union 10) World Meteorological Organization etc. The UNO is relentlessly making efforts to make this planet a better place to live in. Different agencies are doing pioneering work in their respective fields.

Political role of the UNO is not that spectacular as it has no coercive power. Still it (UNO) has served a good platform for negotiation, arbitration and compromise. Its conference policy brings parties to round the table for discussion or negotiation. For example, the UN efforts helped a lot in the formation of present Malaysia in 1963. Through its programme of disarmament it is preventing nations from waging war. Ever since 1946 it has tried its best to tackle very very delicate and ticklish issues such as the nuclear tests, nuclear weapons and the inspection systems. The Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 is the result of its relentless efforts. "On 25 October 1971, with opposition from the United States, but with the support of many Third World nations, the People's Republic of China was given the Chinese seat on the Security Council in place of the Republic of China (also known as Taiwan). The vote was widely seen as a sign of waning American influence in the organization" (Meisler 1995: 195)

CONCLUSION

In political field it has not succeeded in a big way but its efforts are praiseworthy. It is imperfect but altogether essential and indispensable. Its roaring success largely depends on its members themselves. If they are willing nobody can stop the UNO to touch the heights of glory and success. It goes without saying that it is the only hope of mankind. Let us make it stronger and more effective. The UN plays a very important role in promoting economic development. It focuses on peace, security, human rights, international relation, international disputes and other issues.

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