



United Nations

2006-2007 FACT SHEET

61ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

prepared by the Lutheran Office for World Community

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UN STRUCTURE

The **Charter of the United Nations** was signed 26 June 1945, at the conclusion of the *Conference on International Organization* held in San Francisco. The UN has six main bodies:

1. The General Assembly is made up of 192 member states (countries), and is the major decision-making body of the United Nations. The GA began its 61st session in September 2006. Its president is elected for a one-year term.

The GA considers and makes recommendations on the general principles of development, peace and security, except where a dispute is being discussed by the Security Council. It initiates studies and makes recommendations to promote political cooperation, the development of international law, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields.

2. The Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security, and has the authority to send United Nations peace-keeping forces to help reduce tensions in troubled areas, to keep opposing forces apart, and to create conditions of calm. The Council may decide on enforcement measures, economic sanctions (such as trade embargoes) or collective military action.

The Council is made up of 15 member states, with five permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States) and ten members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. The presidency of the Council rotates monthly.

3. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the central forum for discussing economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations, which are submitted to the General Assembly. It is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress; identifying solutions to economic, social and health problems; facilitating cultural and educational cooperation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

ECOSOC considers these issues through a series of Commissions, as well as considers the work of related UN specialized agencies. The Council also receives reports from UN funds and programs. ECOSOC consults with academics, business sector representatives and others constituting more than 2,100 registered non-governmental organizations. The Lutheran World Federation has consultative status with ECOSOC and the Lutheran Office for World Community carries out that representation at UN Headquarters.

4. The Secretariat consists of an international staff (more than 16,000) working in duty stations around the world led by the Secretary General. The candidate for Secretary General is recommended to the General Assembly by the Security Council for a renewable five-year term.

5. International Court of Justice. With 15 judges, the Court has a dual role: to settle in accordance with international law the legal disputes submitted to it by countries, and to give advisory opinions on questions referred to it by authorized international organs and agencies in The Hague, Netherlands. The number of decisions made by the ICJ has been relatively small, but there is an increased willingness to use the Court since the 1980s, especially among developing countries. The US withdrew from compulsory jurisdiction in 1986, meaning it accepts the court's jurisdiction only on a case-to-case basis.

6. Trusteeship Council. Initially established to transition countries out of colonial rule, this body suspended operations in 1994 and is to be phased out under the recently initiated reform process.

more information at
www.un.org/aboutun/mainbodies.htm

LEADER PROFILES

General Assembly President

Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa is the current President of the General Assembly. A national of the Kingdom of Bahrain, she is the fourth woman to hold the GA presidency, and the first Muslim woman to be elected to the position. As a champion of women's rights, Ms. Al-Khalifa has been active in the movement to elevate the status of women before the Islamic Sharia courts, as well as for the progressive interpretation of Islamic texts, especially as they relate to women.

In her address at the opening of the 61st General Assembly, she said she had witnessed several instances where women were harshly treated, and that their suffering had driven her to find solutions to reduce their pain and uphold the principles of the UN Charter, with its emphasis on respect for human rights. "What inspires me is a deep feeling of pain caused by the tragedies all over the world, on both the human and environmental levels."



Ms. Al-Khalifa was elected by acclamation of the 61st General Assembly at its opening on 12 September 2006. She succeeds Jan Eliasson, a national of Sweden, who served as the president of the 60th General Assembly. The president plays a significant role in setting the agenda of the General Assembly, as well as forming consensus between member states on contentious issues.

United Nations Secretary-General



Ban Ki-moon took office as Secretary General on January 1, 2007. Formerly a foreign minister of Korea, he was recommended for the post by the Security Council to the General Assembly, which elected him by verbal acclamation. South Korea's prominence on the world stage has increased dramatically since joining the United Nations in 1991.

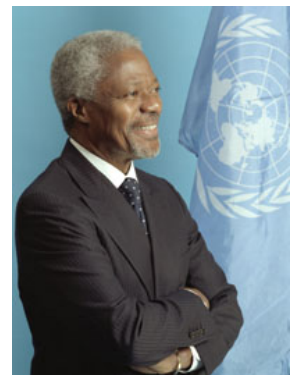
Born June 13, 1944, Mr. Ban attended Korea's most prestigious institute of higher learning, Seoul National University, where he received a degree in international relations in 1970. He earned a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University in 1985. Mr. Ban's first overseas posting was in India, and he also served in Austria, the United Nations and the US along with other positions in Seoul before becoming foreign minister in January 2004.

Kofi Annan of Ghana was the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. He focused on revitalizing the UN through reform, and strengthening the UN's work in development and the maintenance of international peace and security. He rooted his priorities in the UN Charter; advocating for human rights, the rule of law and the universal values of equality, tolerance and human dignity. He worked to restore public confidence in the UN by reaching out to new partners and, in his words, by "bringing the United Nations closer to the people."

In April 2000, Mr. Annan issued a Millennium Report entitled "We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century," calling on member states to commit themselves to an action plan for ending poverty and inequality, improving education, reducing HIV/AIDS, safeguarding the environment and protecting peoples from deadly conflict and violence. The Report formed the basis of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals.

On 10 December 2001, the Secretary-General, jointly with the United Nations, received the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee said Mr. Annan "had been pre-eminent in bringing new life to the Organization." In also conferring the Prize on the world body, the Committee said that it wished "to proclaim that the only negotiable road to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

Mr. Annan's term as Secretary-General ended 31 December 2006.



SNAPSHOT: WORK OF THE UN

The Human Rights Council was formed in March 2006 by vote of the General Assembly to replace the mainly discredited Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Council will meet six times per year, and as needed when emergencies arise. The former Human Rights Commission only met once a year. Members of the Council will also be subject to a new universal review mechanism during their term of membership. The Council is comprised of 47 members, which must show substantial commitments to human rights. The new body is still struggling with some "growing pains" determining its operations. The Lutheran World Federation monitors human rights from their headquarters in Geneva, and periodically submits reports and makes oral statements on specific country situations.

The **United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)** has 18 peacekeeping operations. These missions are staffed by more than 100,000 military/ civilian police and UN volunteers from 108 countries:

Year Launched	Name of Mission
1948	UNTSO* UN Truce Supervision Organization (Jerusalem)
1949	UNMOGIP* UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
1964	UNFICYP UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
1974	UNDOF UN Disengagement Observer Force (Syria)
1978	UNIFIL UN Interim Force in Lebanon
1991	MINURSO UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
1993	UNOMIG* UN Observer Mission in Georgia
1999	UNMIK* UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
1999	MONUC* UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Year Launched	Name of Mission
2000	UNMEE* UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
2002	UNAMA UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
2003	UNMIL* UN Mission in Liberia
2004	UNOCI UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
2004	MINUSTAH* UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
2004	ONUB UN Operation in Burundi
2005	UNMIS* UN Mission in the Sudan
2005	UNOTIL UN Office in Timor-Leste
2006	UNIOSIL* UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone

* Denotes presence of LWF member church or field program.

DPKO efforts assist in political processes, reforming justice systems, training police forces, and disarming former soldiers. Its effort in Sierra Leone destroyed 42,330 weapons and more than 1.2 million rounds of ammunition, disarmed 75,490 combatants, including 6,845 child soldiers, and helped 55,000 ex-fighters return to their lives as civilians. In 2005 alone, UN supported elections in five post-conflict countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Peacebuilding Commission, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and Security Council, is new to the work of the United Nations. Implemented as part of recent reforms, the commission is aimed at further stabilizing countries after war has ended. Burundi and Sierra Leone are among the first countries to be taken up by the specially tailored committees. See www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted by all Member States in 2000, are a set of clearly-defined, measurable objectives to eradicate poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation by 2015. At the request of Kofi Annan, economist Jeffrey Sachs drafted the plan to implement the goals called the "Millennium Project". International organizations, governments, and private sector groups have coordinated their anti-poverty efforts around the MDGs. Civil Society is involved in advocating for the goals through the *Millennium Campaign* and the *Global Call to Action against Poverty*. The ONE Campaign is the United States branch of this movement. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) inaugurated its ONE Lutheran campaign in 2005. Other Lutheran Church bodies are part of Global Call to Action against Poverty. For example, the Lutheran Bishop Dr Zephania Kameeta of Namibia has been appointed as one of his country's ambassadors for the Global Call to Action against Poverty.



**THE CAMPAIGN TO MAKE
POVERTY HISTORY**

www.elca.org/advocacy/one www.whiteband.org

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

NGOs have made vital contributions to the UN since its establishment in 1945. Currently, there are more than 2,500 NGOs associated with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). NGOs with ECOSOC accreditation can make oral statements at the UN, as well as submit written reports. NGOs are given their UN status after an application and review process from a committee of governments.

NGOs can also affiliate themselves with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI). NGOs with DPI-status commit to sharing information about the UN to their members, but cannot make official statements at the UN.

Many NGOs, especially from developing countries, do not have affiliation with the UN because it requires a lengthy application process. This does not prevent the UN from working with NGOs at the local level through UN country offices, and on occasion inviting these NGOs to participate in UN meetings where their expertise is needed.

OTHER UN ENTITIES, PROGRAMS AND FUNDS

The various programs of the UN provide vital work in countries around the world. These are of particular note:

UNDP, the United Nations Development Program is a clearing house for funds with offices in individual nations doing local development related to human rights, justice, anti-corruption, and good governance. UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) and UNV (United Nations Volunteers) fall under UNDP.



UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, is an international development agency that promotes the right of every woman, man, and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity. UNFPA supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. It has an advisory capacity to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

UNHCR, Office for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally, or to resettle. The Lutheran World Federation has operated refugee camps in a number of countries on behalf of UNHCR. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services frequently works with UNHCR to negotiate certain situations, and settle people in the US as needed.

UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund, works for the rights of the Child with the following priorities: girl's education, immunizations, child protection, HIV/AIDS, and early childhood health and education.

ILO, International Labor Organization, works to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity.



WEB RESOURCES

Official United Nations Site: www.un.org

Get involved with Lutheran advocacy: www.elca.org/advocacy ◇ www.lutheranworld.org ◇ www.lirs.org

Millennium Development Goals: www.unmillenniumproject.org ◇ www.millenniumcampaign.org

International Youth Resources: www.takingitglobal.org ◇ www.un.org/youth