Table of Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 3
India joins the UN................................................................................................................................... 5
India at the UN ....................................................................................................................................... 8
Peacekeeping ........................................................................................................................................ 8
Security Council ..................................................................................................................................... 9
International Legal System .................................................................................................................... 11
Human Rights and Democracy .............................................................................................................. 13
Sustainable Development ...................................................................................................................... 15
UN in India ........................................................................................................................................... 18

The UN Resident Coordinator System .................................................................................................. 18
The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) ....................................................... 18
Food and Agriculture Organization ........................................................................................................ 19
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) ....................................................................... 19
International Labour Organization .......................................................................................................... 20
International Organization for Migration ................................................................................................. 20
UNESCO - Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) ................................................................................................................................. 20
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) ........... 21
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) ................................................................ 21
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) .................................................................................. 21
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) ......................... 22
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ..................................... 22
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) .............................................................................................. 23
United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) ...................................................... 23
United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) ............................................................................................. 23
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) .......................................................... 24
United Nations Volunteers (UNV) ........................................................................................................... 24
World Food Programme (WFP) ............................................................................................................... 24
World Health Organization (WHO) ........................................................................................................ 25
Asian Development Bank (ADB) ............................................................................................................ 25
International Finance Corporation (IFC) ................................................................................................. 25
International Monetary Fund (IMF) ........................................................................................................... 26
World Bank (WB) ......................................................................................................................................... 26
United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan (UNIC) ......................................................... 27
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ................................................................. 27
United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) ..................................... 27
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ............................................................................. 28
Other UN agencies, organizations and entities, while not based in India, are actively engaged with
the country................................................................................................................................................... 28
Landmark Moments ................................................................................................................................... 28
1945 ............................................................................................................................................................ 28
1948 ............................................................................................................................................................ 29
1950 ............................................................................................................................................................ 29
1953 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1957 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1972 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1973 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1979 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1980 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1992 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
1993 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
2000 ............................................................................................................................................................ 30
2007 ............................................................................................................................................................ 31
2014 ............................................................................................................................................................ 31
2015 ............................................................................................................................................................ 31
Introduction

A founding member of the United Nations, India has actively engaged with the world body, made significant contributions to its work, and emphatically and consistently affirmed its relevance. Seventy years on, the UN-India relationship has only grown stronger. The United Nations has been a partner in India’s development journey since independence, giving effect to the UN Charter’s determination to promote “the economic and social advancement of all peoples”. India, for its part, has helped strengthen every aspect of the UN’s mandate and operations, contributing to peacekeeping missions, helping develop and strengthen the international legal framework, and asserting the fundamental values of peace, security, development and justice for all.

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in November 1948, former Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru urged Member States to look beyond the “political problems” it was focused on:

“It is a strange thing that when the world lacks so many things, food and other necessities in many parts of the world and people are dying from hunger, the attention of this Assembly of Nations is concentrated only on a number of political problems. There are economic problems also. I wonder if it would be possible for this Assembly to take a holiday for a while from some of the acute political problems which face it, and allow men’s minds to settle down and look at the vital and urgent economic problems, and look at places in the world where food is lacking.”

Nehru also reaffirmed faith in the UN’s potential to address many of those issues:

“I should like to state to this General Assembly, on behalf of my people and my Government, that we adhere completely and absolutely to the principles and purpose of the United Nations Charter and that we shall try, to the best of our ability, to work for the realization of those principles and purposes.”

Fifty years later, in October 1995, then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao said: “[W]e... have the task of making the United Nations truly and effectively the global repository of humankind’s aspirations. Right-thinking nations and peoples working together have in the past achieved miracles. I am confident that they can do so again. India will be proud and happy to be part of such an endeavour.”

At the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee spoke of the need for all countries to “transcend issues of narrow concerns and chart a new course for humanity... [leading] to enduring peace, development and security for all.”
“This unique summit marks the formal entry of the United Nations into the 21st century and the new millennium. More importantly, it reflects the collective desire of peoples living in 189 countries spread across the world to forge a future free of the blemishes of the past. A future that will guarantee equitable development of all nations East and West, North and South. A future that will guarantee freedom from want for nearly a quarter of the world’s peoples living in abject poverty. A future that will guarantee freedom from fear of war among nations and conflicts within societies. And a future in which nations will work together as equals for a new world order based on justice and equality.

And at the historic Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the world’s “evolving understanding of the social, economic and environmental linkages that define our lives”.

“Much of India’s development agenda,” he observed, “is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals”.

“I am pleased that elimination of poverty in all forms everywhere is at the top of our goals. Addressing the needs of 1.3 billion poor people in the world is not merely a question of their survival and dignity or our moral responsibility. It is a vital necessity for ensuring peaceful, sustainable and just world.

... There is no cause greater than shaping a world, in which every life that enters it can look to a future of security, opportunity and dignity; and, where we leave our environment in better shape for the next generation. And, no cause that is more challenging.

At 70, we are called to rise to that challenge, with our wisdom, experience, generosity, compassion, skills and technology.

I am confident that we can.”

As the world grapples with old and new crises – armed conflict, terrorism, the effects of climate change, the persistent challenge of poverty, among others – India’s role continues to evolve. It has taken ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals, having undertaken national consultations, the mapping of ministries responsible for achieving the goals and targets, and interactions with ministries to formulate indicators to measure progress. India continues to contribute to UN peacekeeping – as of August 2017, more than 7,000 military, police and civilian personnel from India were deployed in UN peacekeeping missions around the world.

On 2 October 2016, India ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change, depositing the legal instrument of ratification during a commemorative event in New York to mark the International Day of Non-Violence and the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The global agreement on climate change reached in Paris on December 2015 had been described by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a victory for “climate justice”.
India continues to advocate for reform of the United Nations in order to make it more responsive to the needs of people around the world. India has also argued that the Security Council, in particular, “must reflect contemporary global realities”. Along with other like-minded countries – Brazil, Japan and Germany, collectively known as the G4 – India has proposed the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories of Security Council membership. A number of countries have endorsed India’s candidacy for permanent membership.

India joins the UN

At the time of signing the United Nations Charter, India was not yet independent. Even as it struggled to free itself from colonialism, it started to craft an independent foreign policy and to build a unique relationship with the United Nations. There was much debate among leading political figures in India as to who would represent the country at the conference in San Francisco. The official selection of the delegation, by the Viceroy and the British Government, did not find approval from leaders of the Indian national movement. However, after the formation of the United Nations, Indian leaders took on the role of representing the country.

At the San Francisco conference, the UN Charter was signed on behalf of India by a delegation led by Sir Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar, Member of the Governor-General’s Executive Council and Member of Winston Churchill’s War Cabinet, and Sir V.T. Krishnamachari, Representative of the Indian States. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar went on to serve as the first President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1946.

During 1945-1947, the interim Government of India, under Jawaharlal Nehru, threw itself vigorously into the activities of the United Nations. Its goal was to encourage complementarity between the foreign policy of ‘Free India’ and the objectives of the United Nations. In 1946, India drew the attention of the General assembly to the conditions of Indians in South Africa, marking India’s first international protest against racial discrimination. The same year India also strategically used the international platform to raise its voice against colonialism in India and around the world.

On gaining its independence in August 1947, India continued its focus on freedom for colonized nations and action against racial discrimination. It also called for universal United Nations membership, with the aim of maintaining international peace. At the second session of the United Nations General assembly, in September 1947, as the representative of India, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit said, “the only road to peace and freedom and well-being for us all, is through our steadfast and wholehearted cooperation, at whatever inconvenience, within the framework of the United Nations and in the spirit of the Charter.”
The UN Charter sets out, among other things, the ‘Purposes of the United Nations’, which include, among other things, maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and achieving international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character.

Over the past 70 years, India has strongly and consistently emphasized the relevance and importance of the United Nations. In speech after speech, Indian representatives hailed the UN as symbolizing “the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world”, as statesman and President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan said in this address to the UN General Assembly in 1963:

“There are many people who think that the United Nations has not done all that one could expect of it. But we should look to the work it has done; the work in the Congo, the encouragement it gave to liberation movements and the way in which it brought about a dispassionate and objective discussion of the problems of disarmament and a nuclear test ban. In these ways it has done a not insubstantial work though it may not have reached the expectations we had. In the specialized agencies of the United Nations much good work is being done. The Charter of the United Nations affirms faith in the worth and dignity of the human person. If you believe in the worth and dignity of the human individual, it is necessary for you to do anything and everything in your power to promote the integrity of the physical well-being of human individuals.”

... 

Nationalism is not the highest concept. The highest concept is world community. It is that kind of world community to which we have to attach ourselves. It is unfortunate that we are still the victims of concepts which are outmoded and which are outdated. We are living in a new world, and in a new world a new type of man is necessary. Unless we are able to change our minds, to change our hearts, it will not be possible for us to survive in this world. The challenge that is open to us is; is it to be survival or annihilation? It is easy for us to say that we wish to survive. But what are we doing to
bring about that survival? Are we prepared to surrender a fraction of our national sovereignty for the same of a world order? Are we prepared to submit our disputes and quarrels to arbitration, to negotiation and settlement by peaceful methods? Have we set up a machinery by which peaceful changes could easily be brought about in their world? So long as we do not have it there is no use in merely talking. The concept of one world must be implemented in every action of every nation, if that on world is to become established.”

This was reiterated by A. B. Vajpayee in 1977:

“A great deal undoubtedly remains to be done. We often complain of the lack of will or progress. However, there is no occasion for cynicism and despair. Despite our many disappointments the family of the United Nations has an impressive record of achievement. I would commend the work of the ILO, WHO, UNESCO, FAO, UNCTAD and many other bodies within the United Nations system. Given the required funds these bodies could do a lot more to alleviate human suffering and promote well-being. A case in point is the WHO efforts to eradicate malaria, which is again raising its ugly head: Its programme to eradicate this scourge from the globe is estimated to cost about $450 million-half of what is spent daily for military purposes-yet the programme is dragging for lack of funds. India is convinced of the necessity of supporting, strengthening and developing the United Nations as a universal Organization, not only for preserving peace among nation States and promoting respect for human rights, but also for fostering economic co-operation and harmonizing the actions of States. This is clearly a vital task facing the international community.”
India at the UN

Peacekeeping

India’s support for peacekeeping is universally seen as one of the country’s greatest contributions to the United Nations. It serves as material proof of the depth and strength of the country’s relationship with the United Nations. India is the largest cumulative troop contributor to the United Nations, having provided troops for 50 of the 71 UN peacekeeping operations so far. As of 2016, India had contributed a total of more than 160,000 troops to 43 peacekeeping missions. It has sustained 162 casualties in its support for maintaining peace across the globe.

India’s contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security began prior to its independence. this was its participation in the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, from May to August 1947, in which it made recommendations to help defuse conflict in the region. this was followed by the Indian army’s first commitment to a United Nations assignment, contributing troops as well as medical corps during the Korean War in 1950.

In January 2007, India sent the first-ever all-women police unit to serve in the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia. Nine rotations of the units followed, the last contingent departing Liberia in 2016. In addition to providing guard duty, public order management and conducting night patrols, the all-female units played a key role in supporting and inspiring girls and women in that country. “Through their work, they managed criminality, deterred sexual and gender-based violence and helped rebuild safety and confidence among the population,” former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said.

In light of the significant contributions made by developing countries to UN peacekeeping, India has consistently demanded a greater role for those countries in decision making. India has also advocated for greater financial and human resources for peacebuilding in post-conflict societies where UN peacekeepers are deployed.

“The most important aspect that the Security Council needs to bear in mind when conferring such mandates is that the peacekeeping forces must be provided the resources of personnel and equipment to execute the tasks foreseen. and that prompts me to flag a major infirmity that impacts on the effective conduct of United Nations peacekeeping today. In recent years, those who have the capacities in terms of trained manpower and equipment resources, namely, the developed world, have distanced themselves from peacekeeping. they are thus depriving the United Nations of the capacities required to effectively carry out the mission mandates of “the use of force for the protection of innocent civilians”. the developed countries of the Western world must return to United Nations peacekeeping.”

**Indian Force Commanders in UN Peacekeeping Missions**

- Lt. Gen. P. S. Gyani – Cyprus, March to June 1964 (UNFICYP)
- Gen. K. S. Thimayya – Cyprus, 1964–1965 (UNFICYP)
- Brig. Shiva Kumar – Rwanda, 1995–96 (UNAMIR)

In India, **UN Women** collaborates with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Government of India’s Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) to help countries across the region facilitate women’s access to peace and security operations. Over the last five years, UN Women in India, in collaboration with CUNPK, has conducted more than 26 courses for UN peacekeepers — both men and women — on gender and sexual or gender-based violence prevention, as part of pre-deployment trainings. In a first of its kind initiative, UN Women in India in partnership with CUNPK also developed a **special technical course** for female military officers that was piloted in India.

**Security Council**

When the United Nations was established, the **Security Council** had 11 members, who came from the original 51 founding countries. Of these, 5 were permanent members while 6 were non-permanent and rotating. In 1965, the 6 non-permanent seats were expanded to 10,
bringing the membership of the Security Council to 15. By then, the United Nations comprised 117 Member States and today the number is 193. The complex scope of international relations makes it an ongoing challenge for the Council to fulfil its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.


India has held non-permanent membership on the Council seven times and aspires to become a permanent member. Towards that goal, India has advocated for United Nations reform, especially of the Security Council. In its bid for permanent membership of the Security Council, India has sought and received some measure of support from each of the five permanent members, as well as a large number of other nations. However, reform of the main organs of the UN remains difficult, since it requires amendments to the Charter, adopted and ratified by a vote of two thirds of the members of the General Assembly, including all five of the permanent members. Recently, the G4 group of countries – Brazil, Germany, India and Japan – jointly called for “early reform” of the Security Council and expansion of its permanent and non-permanent members.

During its very first term on the Council, India demonstrated its determination to follow an independent foreign policy by voting to unseat the delegation from the Republic of China in favour of the People’s Republic of China. The question of which entity should be allowed to represent China was contentious, and the seat was not transferred to the People’s Republic of China until 1971.

In 1950, Sir Benegal Rau of India was presiding over the Security Council when a United Nations force was created to assist troops from the Republic of Korea against aggression by forces of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. This force was the precursor to United Nations peacekeeping, which would become one of the Organization’s standing responsibilities. Other issues taken up during India’s first term at the Security Council included the complex question of Palestinian Arab refugees and Israeli action against them, the admission of Indonesia into the United Nations, and the appointment of a new judge to the International Court of Justice.

A key moment in 1985 involved passage of resolution 579, which condemned the practice of hostage-taking as a “manifestation of international terrorism”. During the year, there had been a number of high-profile terrorist attacks, including on Air India flight 182, and consensus on this resolution was achieved with extraordinary speed. Resolution 579 is also an early example of the Security Council’s strategy of targeting terror tactics, rather than attempting to create consensus on an all-encompassing definition of terrorism. Though a comprehensive terrorism
treaty has eluded global consensus, the Security Council persists in its attempts to limit the scope of terrorism through measures that target, for example, hostage-taking, terrorist financing, extradition and foreign terrorist fighters.

Over the years, India has used its membership on the Security Council to protect its foreign policy interests, while simultaneously reinforcing its belief in the twin values of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation. At the highest level of its political leadership, India has expressed its intention to remain actively involved in the Security Council. India has already put forth its candidacy for its next term on the Council, in 2021-2022.

“The UN multilateral system provides a gigantic stage for India to exercise its global leadership, establish soft power and influence, and bring to bear balance and wisdom. I viewed part of my mission in terms of the need of overcoming scepticism as part of India’s investment in multilateralism. At the same time, I worked to ensure that India’s gravitas, unique role and value were recognized in intergovernmental forums and outcomes and in the UN Secretariat.

In the first decade and a half of the 21st century, our country has been on the economic and political ascendancy, allowing some of our country’s representatives to put India’s imprint on every possible sphere of the functioning of the UN. Conversely, during periods of crisis or due to policy neglect, if India ignores the UN and the multilateral system, it does so at its own peril.”

- Hardeep Singh Puri, Former Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

International Legal System

Since the formation of the United Nations, India has been an integral member of the international legal framework. This has enabled it to participate in developing norms, treaties and other instruments to promote the rule of law across the globe.

India follows the dualist theory for implementation of international law at the domestic level, meaning that international treaties do not automatically become part of national law in India. The Parliament of India must draft and pass national legislation to bring international obligations into effect. However, the Supreme Court of India, in Pratap Singh v. State of Jharkhand, has observed that the courts can refer to and follow international treaties, covenants and conventions to which India is a party although they may not be a part of its domestic law.

India has enacted various domestic laws to support these obligations. These include the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act of 2005, Chemical Weapons Convention Act of 2000, the Biological Diversity Act of 2002,
and Diplomatic Relations (Vienna Convention) Act of 1972. In 2011, acknowledging the inextricable link between seamless governance and clean government, India ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which had come into force in 2005. India has also been globally lauded for its work on structuring and negotiating treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, developed between 1982 and 1992.

While efforts are made to secure the agreement of as many countries as possible to a treaty, sometimes key issues in multilateral treaties remain unresolved because of domestic interests or other considerations. In these cases, countries register their dissent by signing with reservations, or by refusing to sign altogether. It is crucial to the efficacy of international law that no country is bound by laws to which it has not agreed. This principle serves to increase the weight of laws to which a country has agreed. India has declined to sign, or has expressed reservations about, several treaties. For example, 191 countries are party to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force under the auspices of the United Nations in 1970.

Along with treaties, judicial decisions by international courts, tribunals and dispute-resolution mechanisms, such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, also serve as sources of international law. Other bodies have made indelible imprints on the stature and character of international law as it exists and evolves today. These bodies include the General Assembly, by passing numerous resolutions; the International Law Commission, by systematizing international law; and the International Court of Justice, by laying out principles of law while adjudicating cases. India has played key roles in each body.

Another important area of international law benefiting from UN contributions is human rights law. The various human rights treaties, treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council alter the landscape of international law. They encourage countries to implement domestic legislation and can even provide legal guarantees of rights to individual citizens living in States that accept their jurisdiction.

It is argued that one of the greatest contributions the United Nations has made to history has been in creating international norms in fields such as development and human rights. With its depth of intellectual resources and decades of experience as a Member State, India’s role in addressing and reconciling these challenges can grow even further if the country chooses to take leadership in creating norms in key fields. In the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on food stockpiling and pharmaceuticals, and climate change negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, India has accepted as well as challenged emerging agreements. In many areas, such as cyber security and energy, international norms have not yet stabilized into a legal regime. Through its expanding global engagement, India has the opportunity to shape the agenda on each of these.

Indian legal scholars such as R. P. Anand, Upendra Baxi, and B. S. Chimni have contributed to international legal scholarship through a school of thought known as ‘third world approaches to
international law’. This aims to offer a critique of neo-liberal international law based in colonialism and project an alternative, more equitable vision of the future. Many scholars have also contributed in the areas of human rights, press freedom, geopolitics, trade transactions, and environmental law, and served as judges on the International Court of Justice.

India contributes to the work of the Sixth (Legal) Committee of the UN General Assembly by bringing in national legal perspectives on the agenda items allocated to the Committee. Indian lawyers are also regularly elected to the UN International Law Commission.

**What is the Rule of Law**

The concept of the *rule of law* is embedded in the Charter of the United Nations. The Preamble of the Charter states as one of the aims of the UN “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained.” In addition, a core purpose of the UN is “to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.” The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 also gives the rule of law a central place, stating that “… it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law…”

**Human Rights and Democracy**

The concept of human rights is sometimes seen as a ‘Western’ invention. This contention is problematic in two ways: first, human rights cannot be seen as a ‘gift from the West’ as they are strongly rooted in other religious and cultural traditions as well. Second, in their present form, human rights are not imposed by the ‘West’ on unwilling developing nations. A diverse community of nations contributed to the modern formulation and upholds it today.

India, too, has a long spiritual tradition of respect for rights. The modern Indian understanding of human rights thus reflects diverse cultural and historical influences, resting in the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

It was the United Nations Charter that set the foundation for the current international human rights architecture. In light of the atrocities of the Nazi regime and the suffering resulting from the Second World War, the international community believed that the provisions of the Charter needed to be further developed in a more specific and practical way. The aim was to create a
guiding document with strong moral force that outlined the details of the vision of a peaceful world.

This document became the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. It reflects contributions from 50 nations representing 5 continents, with the participation of prominent national representatives including Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States, René Cassin of France, Charles Malik of Lebanon, P.C. Chang of China and Hansa Mehta of India. Drafted over a period of two years by the first United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Declaration is a legally non-binding document that outlines a vision of “social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. It is the basis for the growth of the international human rights legal system, including treaties, conventions, review bodies and courts.

Many of the articles of the Declaration were incorporated into the Indian Constitution in the form of the fundamental rights chapter (Part III) of the Indian Constitution and the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part VI). Six fundamental rights are enshrined in Part III – right to equality, right to freedom (including of speech, assembly, movement, and life and liberty), rights against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and the right to constitutional remedies. Courts in India have regularly emphasized the applicability of the Declaration to domestic jurisprudence.

The two major treaties adopted to give legal force to the provisions of the Declaration are the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Seven other core human rights treaties dealing with specific vulnerable groups were also adopted. By ratifying these treaties, Member States commit to incorporating their provisions into national legislation. Each treaty has a review body that receives regular reports from all States parties on their specific situations. Under certain circumstances, these bodies can address complaints by individual citizens. India has ratified many, but not all, of the Conventions and their Protocols. Here is the status of ratification of international human rights treaties.

The primary international review mechanism for monitoring the human rights performance of all 193 UN Member States is the Universal Periodic Review, undertaken by the Human Rights Council. The present Council, comprising 47 Member States, replaced the Commission on Human Rights in 2006 and works as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. The Human Rights Council receives reports from governments, NGOs and other non-State or civil society actors on their national human rights situation every five years.

India was the subject of a Universal Periodic Review first in 2008 and then in 2012 and 2017. Working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council is responsible for advocating for and protecting human rights across the world through its monitoring and oversight functions. It also works through special procedures, such as the appointment of Special Rapporteurs and independent experts to examine and report on a country situation or a specific human rights theme.
In the early decades after achieving independence, India was a vocal proponent of human rights in the international arena. It championed issues such as development over disarmament, elimination of racial discrimination and right to self-determination of peoples. But as India’s own actions came under international scrutiny, the Government chose to soften its diplomatic activism for human rights internationally and withdraw inwards, working instead on stabilizing its own domestic situation. India has taken a number of steps towards strengthening its internal human rights machinery. The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission in 1993, followed by the setting up of various other National Commissions – for women, children, minorities, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, among others – provide concrete mechanisms for addressing human rights violations. Greater powers and resources would strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of these bodies.

India is also home to a thriving civil society that has been playing a significant role in holding the Government accountable and ensuring its responsiveness to human rights concerns. along with civil society, UN agencies in India have also advocated strongly for the rights of specific groups, such as women (UN-Women), children (UNICEF), refugees (UNHCR), and elderly people, people with disabilities and people living in poverty (UNDP). UN specialized agencies partner with local organizations to provide technical assistance, build capacity and undertake and support projects that work directly to improve the material conditions of people’s lives. the date on which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into force, 10 December, is marked as Human Rights Day annually, and the UN organizes events and seminars in partnership with schools, colleges, the National Human Rights Commission and other organizations to reaffirm the commitments made in the Declaration.

In the first three years of my current term, the world has grown darker and dangerous. My vision for the work of my Office has become more determined, drawing even more deeply on the lessons which come to us from our forebears: human rights principles are the only way to avoid global war and profound misery and deprivation.

In continuing to lead this Office I am inspired by movements of people standing up in many countries in defiance of the indefensible. They seek, not power or personal profit; what they seek is justice.

- Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Sustainable Development

The United Nations’ seventieth anniversary coincided with the culmination of the Millennium Development Goals, the landmark commitment entered into by world leaders in 2000 dominated the global development discourse, helped lift more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty, reshaped decision-making and enabled people across the world to improve
their lives and future prospects. But despite the successes, significant gaps remained in eradicating poverty, bridging inequalities and addressing development in all its dimensions – social, economic and environmental.

Ahead of the 2015 deadline for achievement of the MDGs, the United Nations conducted the largest consultation in its history to gauge opinion on what the new development agenda should include. The outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly in 2010 recommended that the Secretary-General facilitate discussion on a post-2015 development agenda.

The Secretary-General undertook several far-reaching initiatives. One was to appoint a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, chaired by the President of Indonesia, the President of Liberia and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. It included 11 thematic and 83 national consultations, door-to-door surveys and the online ‘My World’ survey. In India, the National Consultation on the Post 2015 Development Framework, facilitated by the UN Country team, was informed by substantive inputs from the Government, civil society, women’s groups, youth groups, farmer’s associations, trade unions, industry and business associations, and think tanks.

Importantly, establishing the post-2015 development goals was one of the main outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, at which Member States agreed to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals. While Rio+20 did not elaborate specific goals, it stated that the SDGs should be limited in number, aspirational and easy to communicate; and should balance all three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. Subsequently, a 30-member Open Working Group of the General Assembly was given responsibility for preparing a proposal on the SDGs.

The Open Working Group, co-chaired by the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Kenya, had representatives from 70 countries, including India. It held 13 sessions between March 2013 and July 2014. The Goals were negotiated at these sessions, which involved participants from Member States, the UN system and nine sectors of society termed ‘major groups’, including women, children and youth, along with NGOs. In July 2014, the Open Working Group published its final draft, with 17 suggested goals, which was presented to the UN General Assembly two months later. Member State negotiations followed, and the final wording of the goals and targets, the preamble and the declaration were agreed to in August 2015. India played an important leadership role through the negotiation process and in voicing the concerns of the developing countries. Amit Narang, Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, described the outcome document as “a visionary and transformative document, a blueprint for common action for the common future of us all.”
In September 2015, at the historic seventieth session of the UN General Assembly, 193 world leaders unanimously adopted the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development, committing to achieve an ambitious set of 17 universal goals by 2030.

Addressing the General Assembly at that session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals. Expressing satisfaction that the elimination of poverty in all forms everywhere is at the top of the goals, he said, “Just as our vision behind the agenda 2030 is lofty, our goals are comprehensive. It gives priority to the problems that have endured through the past decades. and, it reflects our evolving understanding of the social, economic and environmental linkages that define our lives.”

The agenda for action, Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is ambitious and far-reaching. It seeks to “strengthen universal peace in larger freedom” and stimulate action in five areas of critical importance: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. the Sustainable Development Goals represent an approach to development that is more holistic and integrated than anything seen before. In simultaneously addressing the three core pillars – environmental, social and economic – it recognizes that they are all interconnected and indispensable for lasting human progress.

Unlike the MDGs, which were exclusively focused on developing countries, the SDGs are universal – they apply to all countries, both industrialized and developing. They are also comprehensive, tackling the issues of development and climate together and addressing both global public goods problems as well as national concerns.

The SDGs have a strong focus on means of implementation, particularly the mobilization of financial resources, capacity-building and technology, as well as on strengthening data collection and institutions. While agenda 2030 is a transformational new development paradigm, the responsibility for implementing and nationalizing it lies with the Member States. It takes into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respects national policies and priorities.

The Government of India has taken the lead in designing the framework for nationalizing and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. Nationally, the task of coordinating them is entrusted to the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), which is also responsible for formulating a 15-year vision agenda, in keeping with the SDG timeline. the Vision 2030 agenda would replace the previous Five Year Plans. Simultaneously, in consonance with NITI Aayog, 29 states and 7 union territories are also charged with developing long-term vision plans consistent with the SDG framework.

The importance of the collective journey of the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be emphasized enough. this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that recognizes that the dignity of the human person is fundamental. It calls on us, where and when we can, and based on our
collective will and action, to reach the furthest behind first and make a lasting difference so that no one will be left behind.

UN in India

Reflecting a thriving 70-year partnership with India, the United Nations agencies, offices, programmes and funds working in the country comprise one of the largest UN field networks anywhere in the world. The diversity of their mandates contributes to India’s development in a variety of ways. Over the coming years, their programmes of action will be dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Government of India's national development plans, in close collaboration with the Government, elected officials, civil society organizations, the corporate sector and other networks. This work is brought together by the UN Resident Coordinator, the designated representative of the Secretary-General in India. The UN system in India in turn keeps the United Nations informed about the changing dynamics of India, one of the most vibrant societies and rapidly maturing economies in the world.

The UN Resident Coordinator System

In 1988 the General assembly established the UN Resident Coordinator system to bring together the UN agencies within a country to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operational activities. In addition to playing this coordination role, the Resident Coordinator is the designated representative of the Secretary-General in the country and serves as the primary interlocutor with the Government of India. The Resident Coordinator works with the UN Country team (UNCT) to deliver tangible results in partnership with the Government, supporting its development agenda. The Resident Coordinator also strategically positions the UN in the country and upholds the UN’s responsibilities in preventing and responding to violations of human rights and humanitarian law, drawing on the support and guidance of the entire UN family.

The forthcoming framework for UN support to the Government of India (starting in 2018) will be informed by key global developments and national priorities. These include the adoption of agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals by Member States; the leadership of the Government of India in this process and the design of India’s long-term development vision.

The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT)

The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) works to bolster national innovation and the development and transfer of technology in countries across the region. This institution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has a mandate covering 53 full Member States and nine associate members. With the support of its Member States, it works to strengthen capacity in three areas: science,
technology and innovation; technology transfer; and technology intelligence (collection of technical information).

India has been a leading partner in APCTT’s programmes to strengthen capacities in Member States with the goal of fostering research and innovation. The Government of India is a permanent member of APCTT’s Governing Council and guides the Centre’s technical and administrative operations. India also supports many of its regional projects. Through South-South cooperation, APCTT helps to build capacity across the Asia-Pacific region, drawing on India as a major source of expertise.

**Food and Agriculture Organization**

India was among the first signatories when the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was created in 1945 to fight hunger in the food-scarce aftermath of the Second World War. When FAO began its India operations in 1948, its priority was to transform India’s food and farm sectors through technical inputs and support for policy development. India has come a long way since its days as a food deficit country: it now has buffer food grain stocks of up to 60 million tonnes. Over the years, FAO’s contribution has extended to issues such as access to food, nutrition, livelihoods, rural development and sustainable agriculture.

Many FAO Member States have benefited immensely from the people, programmes and technical trainings offered by India, which continues to be an important knowledge partner of FAO. With the Sustainable Development Goals on the horizon, much of FAO’s focus in India will be on sustainable agricultural practices.

**International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is an international financial institution as well as a specialized United Nations agency. IFAD’s goal is to enable poor rural people to improve their food and nutrition security, increase their incomes and strengthen their resilience. IFAD also provides a global platform for discussing rural policy issues.

In India, IFAD strives to ensure access to productive resources (land, forest and water) and services (extension, microfinance and markets). It targets the poorest and most vulnerable populations, especially tribal communities, smallholder farmers, landless people, women and youth. IFAD and the Government of India have achieved significant results in commercialization of smallholder agriculture, grass-roots institution-building, women’s empowerment, promoting access to rural finance, and supporting development in tribal areas. In India, IFAD has sharpened its focus on ‘finance plus’ aspects, offering not only financial assistance but also knowledge-sharing to help build capacity.
International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was created in 1919, based on the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is rooted in social justice. ILO is a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind, bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies. ILO was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969.

India is a founding member of ILO and has been a permanent member of its governing body since its establishment. In line with ILO’s mission to promote decent work for all, the tripartite constituents formulated the Decent Work Country Programme, introduced in India in 2013. It has four priorities: promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work; employment opportunities for women and men; a social protection floor with minimum social guarantees for access to health services and for income security for children, the working-age population and old people; and strengthened labour administration machinery. ILO provides technical advisory services to help tripartite constituents achieve the outcomes under these priorities.

International Organization for Migration

India’s association with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) dates back to the 1990s, when IOM assisted Indian citizens who were among the thousands of people displaced by the Persian Gulf War. In 2001, IOM’s prompt and effective assistance during the Gujarat earthquake planted the seed of IOM operations in India as a humanitarian agency.

In India, IOM’s initial work involved economic rehabilitation of survivors of human trafficking. In 2007, recognizing India as a major labour-sending and labour-receiving country and its importance as a remittance-receiving country, IOM began working with migrants on safe and legal migration, warning them of the risks associated with irregular migration. India became a full member of IOM in 2008. Since then, IOM has supported the Government on migration management, with a strong focus on labour migration. It pioneered the establishment of resource centres to provide one-stop service on all migration issues.

UNESCO - Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)

The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) is UNESCO’s first Category I institute in the Asia-Pacific region, established with generous support from the Government of India. (Category I entities are regarded as being an integral part of UNESCO.) The Institute’s global mandate is to transform education policies and practices by developing innovative teaching and learning methods. Its objective is to equip generations of young people to create peaceful and sustainable societies.
In India, UNESCO MGIEP’s work is geared towards embedding skills for peace and sustainable development into curricula, fostering youth programmes and networks to change education systems, and developing innovative, research-based pedagogies. Given the importance of innovation to UNESCO MGIEP’s mandate, its activities make use of the latest information and communication technologies. Another initiative involves developing games and simulations that incorporate the principles of peace and sustainable development.

**United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)**

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is a global champion for women and girls. The entity was created in 2012 following sustained advocacy by women’s rights activists and years of negotiations between UN Member States, women’s groups and civil society.

In India, UN-Women’s five priority areas are ending violence against women and girls, expanding women’s leadership and participation, making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting, enhancing women’s economic empowerment, and engaging women as global peacebuilders and negotiators. UN-Women works with women, men, women’s networks, governments, local authorities and civil society to create national strategies to advance gender equality in line with national and international priorities. UN-Women stands for women’s equal participation in all aspects of life.

**Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was officially launched in 1996 as an innovative venture bringing together the efforts and resources of numerous UN organizations in the global response to HIV and AIDS. Its mission is to help prevent new HIV infections, care for people living with HIV and mitigate the impact of the epidemic.

Through an inter-country team in New Delhi during the initial years, UNAIDS brought together the governments in the region on a platform of mutual support and helped them to formulate an effective response to AIDS. UNAIDS in India has worked in solidarity with the people most affected by HIV, and in defence of human dignity, human rights and gender equality. Its work also provides important lessons on the transformative nature of the AIDS response in global development and social justice. These lessons will inform efforts as India and the rest of the world gear up to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

Over the last six decades, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has supported some of India’s most important development initiatives. They have covered virtually all areas of
human development, from democratic governance and poverty eradication to renewable energy and environmental management.

In the 1950s and 1960s, UNDP helped establish institutions of major national importance, including space centres and nuclear research laboratories. During the 1970s, UNDP supported the establishment of institutions that led to India’s emergence as a world leader in technological development. During the 1990s, UNDP promoted the human development concept in India. India now produces more human development reports than any other country, with coverage down to district level. Over the last decade, UNDP has focused on building the resilience of people faced with the risks of natural disasters and climate change, and of minorities to various forms of discrimination. UNDP has now moved beyond directly supported projects, providing capacity development assistance for the implementation of government programmes.

**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is the main economic and social development centre of the UN in the region. Headquartered in Bangkok, ESCAP fosters cooperation among its 53 Member States and nine associate members. It responds to the development needs and priorities of the region through its convening authority, economic and social analysis, normative standard-setting and technical assistance.

Even before its independence, India was articulating a vision of regional cooperation. It has hosted a number of high-level ESCAP conferences in addition to numerous workshops and policy dialogues. In December 2011, a new South and South-West Asia office of ESCAP was inaugurated in New Delhi. It serves 10 countries in the subregion. As it moves up the development ladder, India has been sharing its experience and capabilities with fellow developing countries in the region and beyond, using ESCAP’s platform for this purpose.

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded in 1945 to develop the “intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind” as a means of building lasting peace. Today the core purpose of UNESCO’s education programme is to achieve Education for all, which, in its broadest sense, means at all levels, throughout life.

In India, UNESCO has provided technical support to several premier educational institutions. the Internal Migration in India Initiative, launched in 2011, supports the social inclusion of migrants through research, policy and advocacy. As part of its World Heritage programme, it has recognized 27 cultural heritage sites in India, such as the Taj Mahal and the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. UNESCO has also played a pioneering role in the development of community radio in India, having helped to formulate the Community Radio Policy of 2002.
Another priority is promoting freedom of expression and information, including by protecting the safety of journalists and ensuring the right to information.

**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

The United Nations Population Fund supports countries in using population data for policies and programmes 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.

In India, UNFPA’s approach focuses on empowering women and expanding access to education, health services and employment opportunities. It also recognizes adolescents and young people as change makers. Since 1974, UNFPA has been supporting the Government of India on population issues through a series of five-year country programmes. The current programme, from 2013 to 2017, reflects India’s middle-income status by placing greater emphasis on policy development and advocacy. UNFPA encourages South-South collaboration, working with the private sector, promoting knowledge sharing and fostering innovation. Its strategic focus is now on adolescents and other youth, including special efforts to reach out to marginalized people.

**United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat)**

The United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) promotes socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. Its seven priorities are: urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; and urban research and capacity development.

UN-Habitat’s initiatives in India include supporting government projects on sanitation coverage in urban areas, urban water supply and environmental improvement, and supporting organizations that empower women’s group and youth groups to fight social exclusion. UN-Habitat works to create livable, safe and healthy cities that are socially inclusive, environmentally regenerative and economically vibrant, with a singular cultural identity.

**United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**

The United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works to advance the rights of Indian children, adolescents and women to survival, growth, development, participation and protection.

In India, UNICEF supports initiatives that aim to reduce inequities based on caste, ethnicity, gender, poverty, region and religion; and to ensure that children can realize their rights to health, nutrition, education, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene. It engages families and community members in understanding their roles as both rights-holders and duty-bearers.
in ensuring their children survive and thrive, while providing a platform for young community champions to emerge and inspire. UNICEF’s initiatives in India include supporting rural water supply programmes and immunization campaigns and providing humanitarian assistance during disasters. It is also supporting nationwide campaigns on maternal and child nutrition and the reduction of neonatal mortality and stillbirth rates to single digits by 2030.

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) promotes and accelerates inclusive and sustainable industrial development in developing countries and economies in transition.

UNIDO has been active in India since its founding, and in five decades of operation it has delivered $225 million worth of technical services to a broad range of local partners. UNIDO’s Regional Office mobilises knowledge, information, innovation, skills and technology to promote competitive industry and productive employment by applying best practices and approaches to common problems of the region, whilst also protecting the environment.

**United Nations Volunteers (UNV)**

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, administered by UNDP, promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide by advocating for volunteerism, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers to support the work of UN entities.

The UNV India Programme is one of the largest UNV programmes in the world. UN Volunteers have supported the Government and communities in the aftermath of the Gujarat earthquake in 2001 and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. They also supported decentralized planning, capacity-development of elected representatives and initiatives for children with disabilities. Recognizing the vast potential of youth in India, UNV and UNDP entered into a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Youth affairs and Sports in 2014. Its purpose is to strengthen India’s youth volunteer infrastructure to engage more youth in community development.

**World Food Programme (WFP)**

The World Food Programme (WFP) focuses on hunger alleviation and food security. Globally, it responds to emergencies making sure food reaches where it is needed, especially in times of civil strife and natural disasters.

In India, the World Food Programme (WFP) has delivered assistance in India through nearly 100 development and emergency assistance projects. It has now moved from providing direct food aid to providing technical assistance and capacity building services to the Government of India.
WFP is focusing on enabling the country’s food-based social safety nets to function more efficiently and effectively in providing food to their target population. Its focus areas include food and nutrition security, strengthening food-based safety nets, fortification of food, food security mapping and analysis, addressing nutrition concerns during the first 1000 days of life, and addressing the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons.

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, providing evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

The WHO South-East Asia Regional Office based in India provides technical assistance and support to the countries of the region in improving the health of their people. The WHO country office for India was established in the late 1980s. In India, WHO has played a critical role in strategic health planning. It has also been instrumental in the country’s transition from hospital-based to community-based care and the resultant increase in health posts and centres focusing on primary care. In 2000, its mandate was expanded to include community health, noncommunicable diseases, mental health, health systems development, sustainable development and healthy environment, and health action in emergencies.

**Asian Development Bank (ADB)**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) works to eliminate poverty from Asia and the Pacific. as a multilateral development bank, its mission is to help developing Member States improve the living conditions and quality of life of their people through infrastructure-led growth.

During the first decade of its operations in India, ADB’s initiatives were focused largely on national-level entities through central public utilities in the transport and energy sectors. today, while continuing to support India’s endeavours to reduce poverty through infrastructure led growth, ADB’s India programme has expanded its sectoral, geographic and thematic coverage, in line with the Government’s evolving priorities and increasing focus on inclusive and sustainable growth. the Bank now has a presence in over 20 states, and its investments in basic infrastructure and services, such as electricity, roads and water supply, have benefited millions of India’s people.

**International Finance Corporation (IFC)**

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) was created in 1956 as the private-sector investment arm of the World Bank Group. IFC was an early champion of India’s nascent private
sector, which went on to transform the economy of the country in the 1990s and early in the new millennium. IFC has invested over $15 billion in India since it began in 1959. Its portfolio covers infrastructure, renewable energy, logistics, financial inclusion and health care.

IFC plays a key role in strengthening the microfinance sector in India through investments and advice. It also has a leading role in financing infrastructure projects in India and advising client governments on public-private partnerships. In 2009 it became one of the earliest international financiers of renewable energy (wind and solar) projects in India.

**International Monetary Fund (IMF)**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

The IMF’s fundamental mission is to help ensure stability in the international system. It does so in three ways: keeping track of the global economy and the economies of member countries; lending to countries with balance of payments difficulties; and giving practical help to members. In India, the focus of IMF’s work is to facilitate the flow of information between Government of India, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and IMF, and train officials from RBI, and national and state governments. the IMF estimates that India has become the fastest-growing large economy in the world in 2016. It expects that India’s role as a major global economic player and shareholder in the Fund will continue to grow in the years to come.

**World Bank (WB)**

The World Bank (WB) is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs. The World Bank is a component of the World Bank Group, which is part of the United Nations system. It comprises two institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and the International Development Association (IDA). The World Bank’s goal is the reduction of poverty.

Since the World Bank first began work in India, the Group has undertaken more than 700 projects across a range of sectors with a combined worth of around $120 billion. Its initiatives include the development of the eastern dedicated freight corridor, which will carry freight at high speeds in an environmentally friendly manner along a key transport artery. The Group is supporting the rejuvenation of the Ganga and the country’s ambitious programme to revive inland waterways, as well as helping to build skills, create smart cities, ramp up rural sanitation and make power accessible to all of India’s people.
United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan (UNIC)

The United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan (UNIC) serves as the information hub for the UN system, building awareness of the United Nations and promoting its values of peace, development and human rights. The UNIC Director is the spokesperson for the United Nations and represents the Secretary-General at important occasions and events.

In addition to keeping the Government and the public informed about the workings of the UN, it provides information to UN Headquarters about the socioeconomic and political realities of the country. UNIC leads the UN Communication Group and conveys the group’s strategy and advice to the UN country team. UNIC collaborates with partners such as embassies, schools and cultural centres to commemorate important dates observed by the UN, such as UN Day, International Human Rights Day, International Women’s Day, World Water Day, International Youth Day, International Day of Older Persons and International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

India has a long tradition of receiving refugees that goes back centuries. UNHCR’s support to India dates back to 1969-1975 when it coordinated aid to Tibetan refugees as well as refugees from then East Pakistan. In more recent times, the two largest groups of refugees in India, around 200,000 Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans, are directly being assisted by the Government of India. UNHCR’s urban operation is based in New Delhi with a smaller presence in Chennai that helps Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu voluntarily repatriate back to Sri Lanka.

In the absence of a national legal framework for refugees, UNHCR conducts refugee status determination under its mandate for asylum seekers who approach the Office. The two largest groups of refugees recognized by UNHCR are Afghans and Myanmar nationals, but people from countries as diverse as Somalia and Iraq have also sought help from the Office. UNHCR together with its partners and civil society also provides a range of services to support refugees and asylum-seekers in health, education, legal counseling, vocational skills and livelihoods.

United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)

The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), the second oldest among the UN peacekeeping operations, has its origin in the conflict between India and Pakistan over the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. It exists to supervise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and has been called upon to do so in its various forms over the years.

UNMOGIP deploys military observers in UN field stations on both sides of the Line of Control and Working Boundary. They maintain observation posts and conduct field trips and area
reconnaissance and investigate complaints of ceasefire violations and Working Boundary incidents. Difficult terrain, adverse climatic conditions and the remote location are among the challenges the military observers face. The Indian and Pakistani armies provide the premises for the field stations as well as drivers and security for headquarters, field stations and mobile teams.

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) helps Member States address illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. UNODC has worked in India over the last 25 years to address drug trafficking in the context of a constantly evolving drug market, involving an increasing number of drugs and psychoactive substances. It also works with the government to address human trafficking, and the prevention, treatment and care of persons who use drugs and live with HIV.

As part of its advocacy, in recent years UNODC has also organized panel discussions, theatre and football matches to bring together parliamentarians, government officials, the media and the general public with members of the drug-using community to encourage understanding and compassion.

Other UN agencies, organizations and entities, while not based in India, are actively engaged with the country.

The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** advocates balanced growth through trade. It supports developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively, and helps them deal with the potential drawbacks of greater economic integration. It provides analysis, consensus-building, and technical assistance which helps countries use trade, investment, finance, and technology as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable development. India’s consistently strong voice for the developing world has made it a major player with UNCTAD, spanning a multiplicity of economic reforms.

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. In India, it collaborates with the government through the Ministry of Environment and Forests and other partners to address the country’s environmental challenges.

**Landmark Moments**

1945: India signed the **United Nations Charter** on 26 June 1945, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, along with 49 other countries in San
Francisco, United States. It came into force on 24 October 1945 – the day is celebrated every year as United Nations Day.

1948: The UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. The day is celebrated every year as Human Rights Day. India was one of 48 countries to vote in favour of the Declaration. The Declaration is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, it set out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.

1948: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his first address as Prime Minister of India to the UN General Assembly on 3 November 1948. Excerpts:

“…I am convinced that, however good the ends, the larger ends of the United Nations, or the lesser objectives which we may from time to time have before us, either as individual nations or as groups of nations, it is important that we should remember that the best of objectives may not be reached if our eyes are bloodshot and our minds clouded with passion. Therefore, it becomes essential for us, for a while, to think more of how we are doing things than what we are aiming at, even though we should never forget what we are aiming at. It becomes necessary for us always to remember the principles and the purposes for which this great Assembly was formed.

“I should like to state to this General Assembly, on behalf of my people and my Government, that we adhere completely and absolutely to the principles and purpose of the United Nations Charter and that we shall try, to the best of our ability, to work for the realization of those principles and purposes.”


1950: In its first commitment to UN peacekeeping, India sent troops and medical corps during the Korean War in 1950. These included a paramedical unit comprising 17 officers, 9 Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and 300 other ranks, which was deployed to facilitate the withdrawal of the sick and wounded in Korea. Lt. Gen. K. S. Thimmaya was appointed Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) set up by UN. India also provided a custodian force under Maj. Gen. S.P.P. Thorat comprising 231 officers, 203 JCOs and 5696 other ranks. India has gone on to become the largest cumulative troop contributor to the United Nations, having provided troops for 50 of the 71 UN peacekeeping operations so far.

1953: Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became the first woman to be elected president of the UN General Assembly. Since then, only two women have held the position so far – Angie Elisabeth Brooks of Liberia in 1969 and Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of Bahrain in 2006.

1957: India’s V. K. Krishna Menon holds the record for the longest speech in the history of the UN Security Council. During a debate on ‘The India-Pakistan Question’, Menon spoke for five hours on 23 January, finally collapsing due to exhaustion. He spoke for nearly three more hours the next day, concluding that the issue at hand was “not a dispute for territory”, but a problem of aggression”. The Council, he said was enjoined by the UN Charter to take “action consistent with the crime of invasion”.

1972: At the Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi illustrated the connection between ecological conservation and poverty alleviation. “Unless we are in a position to provide employment and purchasing power for the daily necessities of the tribal people and those who live in or around our jungles, we cannot prevent them from combing the forest for food and livelihood... How can we speak to those who live in villages and in slums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and air clean, when their own lives are contaminated at the source?”

1973: India signed the Biological Weapons Convention, ratifying it in 1974. The Convention bans the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons.

1979: India acceded to the International Conventions on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).


1992: India acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Convention brings together the children’s human rights articulated in other international instruments. This Convention articulates the rights more completely and provides a set of guiding principles that fundamentally shapes the way in which we view children.

1993: India signed the Chemical Weapons Convention, ratifying it in 1996. The multilateral, Disarmament Treaty bans the development, production, acquisition, transfer, use and stockpile of all chemical weapons.

2000: India signed the Millennium Declaration that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight Goals agreed to by all UN Member States, to be achieved by the year 2015. India made significant progress on the MDGs, but achievements varied across Goals and states, according to a 2015 UN report.
2007: India signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention requires States Parties to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

2007: The UN General Assembly declared 2 October, Mahatma Gandhi’s birth anniversary, as the International Day of Non-Violence.

2007: India sent the first-ever all-women contingent to peacekeeping mission in Liberia. From 2007 to 2016, nine rotations of all-female police units from India were deployed in Liberia. Their primary responsibilities have been to provide 24-hour guard duty and public order management and to conduct night patrols in and around the capital, Monrovia, while assisting to build the capacity of local security institutions.

2014: 21 June was declared as the annual International Day of Yoga, aiming to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

2015: At a historic UN summit, world leaders, including India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which came into force on 1 January 2016. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the MDGs and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty.

2015: India, along with 194 other countries, signed the Paris Agreement aimed at slowing the process of global warming by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The Paris Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016.