LOTUSARISE IAS

FREE SAMPLE

UPSC CSE 2027 EDITION



UPSC CIVIL SERVICES · PRELIMS & MAINS
GENERAL STUDIES PAPER II

International Relations

Part 2

Regional and Global Groupings, International Institutions and Agencies

Compiled by Arvind KrS

IN THIS BOOK

UNIT IV	Regional and Global Groupings
UNIT V	International Institutions, Agencies and Fora

2	43	89	335
UNITS	CHAPTERS	PYQS · 2013–2026	PAGES

lotusarise.com

Updated to October 2026

GS PAPER II | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · PART 2

International Relations — Part 2

Regional and Global Groupings, International Institutions and Agencies

UPSC CSE 2027 Edition · Updated to October 2026 · 2 units · 43 chapters · Previous year questions in 30 chapters

IN THIS BOOK

04 Regional and Global Groupings
05 International Institutions, Agencies and Fora

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

Free sample. This file contains two complete chapters of the book and may be shared freely, as long as it is not changed. The complete book is available at store.lotusarise.com.

LOTUSARISE IAS

International Relations — Part 2

Regional and Global Groupings, International Institutions and Agencies

UPSC CSE 2027 Edition · Updated to October 2026 · Compiled October 2026

© 2026 LotusArise IAS. All rights reserved. This PDF is licensed to the purchaser for personal study only. Copying, sharing, reselling or uploading it to any website, drive or group, in whole or in part, is not permitted.

Questions or corrections: support@lotusarise.com

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

Contents

UNIT 04 **Regional and Global Groupings** 5

57 Regionalism & Multilateralism 7
58 BRICS & New Development Bank (NDB) ..... IN THIS SAMPLE 13
59 BIMSTEC 25
60 SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) 37
61 South Asia Sub Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) 46
62 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) 50
63 G-7 (Group of Seven) and India 55
64 G20 or Group of Twenty 60
65 IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Forum 69
66 AUKUS Alliance 74
67 Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) 79
68 Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECR) 85
69 India and Indian Ocean Region 96
70 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) 108
71 Group of Four (G-4) Countries 115
72 Coffee Club (Uniting for Consensus) Group 119
73 OPEC – Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries 122
74 Paris Club 126

UNIT 05 **International Institutions, Agencies and Fora** 131

75 United Nations ..... IN THIS SAMPLE 133
76 United Nations Specialised Agencies 156
77 United Nations Principal Organs 167
78 United Nation Security Council 176
79 United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) 180
80 International Court of Justice (ICJ) 184
81 International Criminal Court (ICC) 191
82 World Bank Group 198
83 International Monetary Fund (IMF) 210

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

84 World Trade Organisation (WTO) 221
85 UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization) 239
86 UN Peacekeeping Forces 247
87 World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) 255
88 International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) 259
89 Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) 264
90 World Health Organization (WHO) 272
91 International Labour Organization (ILO) 284
92 UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) 290
93 International Solar Alliance (ISA) 295
94 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 301
95 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 307
96 Arctic Council & India's Arctic Policy 314
97 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 323
98 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 327
99 Collective Security Treaty Organization 333

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

UNIT 04 | 18 CHAPTERS

Regional and Global Groupings

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

CHAPTERS

57	Regionalism & Multilateralism	7
58	BRICS & New Development Bank (NDB)	13
59	BIMSTEC	25
60	SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)	37
61	South Asia Sub Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC)	46
62	Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)	50
63	G-7 (Group of Seven) and India	55
64	G20 or Group of Twenty	60
65	IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Forum	69
66	AUKUS Alliance	74
67	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)	79
68	Multilateral Export Control Regimes (MECR)	85
69	India and Indian Ocean Region	96
70	Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)	108
71	Group of Four (G-4) Countries	115
72	Coffee Club (Uniting for Consensus) Group	119
73	OPEC – Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries	122

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

74 Paris Club 126

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

GS PAPER II | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · PART 2

BRICS & New Development Bank (NDB)

CONTENTS

01 Objectives
02 Significance
03 BRICS Bank { New Development Bank (NDB) }
04 Challenges Associated with BRICS
05 Importance of BRICS for India
06 Way Forward
07 Previous Year Questions

- The **acronym BRIC was formulated by Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs in 2001**, in a report on growth prospects of **Brazil Russia, India and China,** which together represent a significant share of the world's population and GDP. As per the report, **these countries would be amongst the world's largest economies in the next 50 years**. **BRIC converted to BRICS with the addition of South Africa in 2010.**
- All the 5 members of BRICS are leading developing or newly industrialized countries, but they have distinct features like large, fast-growing economies having significant influence on regional affairs, and **all the five are members of G-20** (among the newer members, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia are also in the G-20).
- The BRICS Leaders' Summit is convened **annually.**
- **The BRICS brings together five of the largest developing countries of the world, representing 41% of the global population, 24% of the global GDP and 16% of the global trade.**
- After its **expansion in 2024–25**, the grouping accounts for **nearly half of the world's population and more than a quarter of the global economy** (about 35% of world GDP in PPP terms, 2022 estimate).
- It's an emerging investment market and global power bloc.

Membership

- **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa** (founding members)
- **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE** joined on **1 January 2024**; **Indonesia** joined on **6 January 2025** as the first South-East Asian member.
- **Saudi Arabia** was invited at the 2023 Johannesburg summit. Official BRICS and Indian sources list it as a member (making 11), but Riyadh has not publicly confirmed accession. **Argentina** declined its invitation in December 2023.

- **Partner countries (10):** Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam – a category created at the Kazan summit (2024).



01 Objectives

The grouping was formed for **mutual interest in the economic sphere**, but the agenda of BRICS has widened over the years to encompass topical global issues too. **The objectives of BRICS are as follows:**

- It aims to **enhance market access opportunities and facilitate market inter-linkages.**
- It aims to **promote mutual trade and investment, and create a business-friendly environment** for investors and entrepreneurs in all BRICS countries.
- They aim to **strengthen macro-economic policy coordination**, and **build resilience to external economic shocks.**
- They **strive for inclusive economic growth in order to eradicate poverty**, and address issues of unemployment and promote social inclusion.
- Overall, the platform aims to **promote peace, prosperity, security and development in a multipolar, interconnected and globalized world.**

With respect to the world, the objectives of BRICS are:

- BRICS countries act as a group **to promote a more legitimate international system, including advocacy for reform of the UN Security Council.**
- BRICS is a **South-South framework for cooperation**.
- It aims to **act as a bridge between developed and developing countries**. Example, in WTO, BRICS countries are trying to promote a fair order regarding the agricultural policies.
- BRICS can play an increasingly important role in **assisting developing countries in gaining an advantage in trade and climate change negotiations** at the global level.
- **Creation of New Development Bank and Contingency Reserve can increase the bargaining power of developing countries.**
- All these countries have a **shared interest in challenging the current governance of Western financial institutions like IMF and World Bank.**

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

Principles

- **Full respect for the sovereignty of the member states.**
- **Commitment to international law and recognition of the central role of UN on peace, security and development.**
- Bilateral relations among these countries have been conducted on the **principles of non-interference, equality and mutual benefit.**
- **Openness, sharing of information and consensus in decision making.**
- Recognizing the **multipolar nature of global economic and financial system.**

Structure of BRICS

- BRICS **does not exist in form of organization,** but it is an **annual summit between the supreme leaders** of the member nations (five until 2023). It has no charter or permanent secretariat.
- The **Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually** among the members, in accordance **with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.** Russia chaired in 2024, Brazil in 2025, **India in 2026**, and **China will chair in 2027**.
- BRICS cooperation in the past decade has expanded to include an annual programme of over 100 sectoral meetings.

Timeline

- The **first BRIC Summit took place in 2009 in the Russian Federation** and focused on issues such as reform of the global financial architecture.
- **South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010**, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS. **South Africa subsequently attended the Third BRICS Summit in Sanya, China**, in March 2011.
- **15th Summit, Johannesburg (22–24 August 2023):** Six countries – Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE – were invited to join from 1 January 2024 (Argentina later withdrew).
- **16th Summit, Kazan, Russia (22–24 October 2024):** The first summit of the expanded group adopted the **Kazan Declaration** and created the **"partner country" category**. On its sidelines, PM Modi and President Xi held their first formal bilateral meeting in five years, after the India–China patrolling agreement on the LAC.
- **17th Summit, Rio de Janeiro (6–7 July 2025):** The first summit with Indonesia as a member. The Rio Declaration **condemned the Pahalgam terror attack "in the strongest terms"** and issued statements on global governance of AI and against trade protectionism. Xi Jinping skipped a BRICS summit for the first time since 2012, and Putin joined virtually.
- **18th Summit, New Delhi (12–13 September 2026):** Hosted by India at Bharat Mandapam under the theme **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability"**.
  - Adopted the **New Delhi Declaration**, which again condemned the Pahalgam attack, reiterated "zero tolerance" for terrorism, criticised unilateral tariffs and backed a WTO-centred trading system.
  - Backed the **BRICS Payment Task Force**'s work on interoperable payment systems and local-currency settlement, but did **not create a common BRICS currency**; supported further work on a proposed **BRICS Grain Exchange**.
  - Xi Jinping attended – his first visit to India in seven years – and held talks with PM Modi; President Putin also attended.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- The summit endorsed **China's chairship in 2027**.

02 Significance

- The five countries together represent **43% of global population, their combined GDP is 30% of global GDP, and they have a 17% share in world trade.** With the new members, the expanded BRICS now covers nearly half of humanity and includes major energy producers (Iran, the UAE and, on official lists, Saudi Arabia).
- **BRICS represents Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America**, which gives their cooperation a transcontinental dimension which makes it more valuable and significant.
- BRICS economies have been regarded as the **engines of the global economic recovery**, which underscores the changing roles of these countries in the contemporary world scenario.
- In the aftermath of the recent financial crisis, **BRICS countries were influential in shaping the macroeconomic policies in the G-20 meetings.**
- In the present multipolar world, BRICS countries are **helping the cause of developing countries** and are key stakeholders in global decision making involving developing countries.
- **With negotiations in WTO and climate change becoming important**, the coming together of BRICS as a grouping has become more significant.

Main Areas of Cooperation within BRICS

1. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

- There are rapidly growing trade and investment flows between BRICS countries as well as economic cooperation activities across a range of sectors.
- Agreements have been concluded in the areas of Economic and Trade Cooperation; Innovation Cooperation, Customs Cooperation; strategic cooperation between the BRICS Business Council , Contingent Reserve Agreement and the New Development Bank.
- These agreements contribute to realisation of the shared objectives of deepening economic cooperation and fostering integrated trade and investment markets.

2. PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXCHANGE

- BRICS members have recognised the need for strengthening People-to-People exchanges and to foster closer cooperation in the areas of culture, sport, education, film and youth.
- People-to-People exchanges seek to forge new friendships; deepen relations and mutual understanding between BRICS peoples in the spirit of openness, inclusiveness, diversity and mutual learning.
- Such People to people exchanges include the **Young Diplomats Forum, Parliamentarian Forum, Trade Union Forum, Civil BRICS** as well as the **Media Forum**.

3. POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

- BRICS member political and security cooperation is aimed at achieving peace, security, development and cooperation for a more equitable and fair world.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- BRICS provides opportunities for sharing policy advice and exchanges of best practices in terms of domestic and regional challenges as well as advancing the restructuring of the global political architecture so that it is more balanced, resting on the pillar of multilateralism.
- BRICS is utilised as a driver for South Africa's foreign policy priorities including the pursuit of the **African Agenda** and **South-South Cooperation**.

4. COOPERATION MECHANISM

- Cooperation among members is achieved through:
  - **Track I:** Formal diplomatic engagement between the national governments.
  - **Track II:** Engagement through government-affiliated institutions, e.g. state-owned enterprises and business councils.
  - **Track III:** Civil society and People-to-People engagement.

Developments

- An advisory group to be set up for the full operationalization of **Part NIR (Partnership on New Industrial Revolution)** aimed at deepening BRICS cooperation in digitalization, industrialization, innovation, inclusiveness and investment.
- **BRICS bank or New Development Bank (NDB) has been set up.**
- **BRICS has agreed to set up credit rating agency:** to set up an independent rating agency based on market oriented principles. This would further strengthen the global governance architecture.
- There is proposal for establishing a **BRICS Agriculture Research Platform, BRICS Railway Research Network, BRICS Sports Council, and various youth-centric fora; BRICS Media Academy and BRICS news portal.**
- **BRICS Business Council** was established to represent many industries and economic sectors of these 5 countries.
- BRICS perceives power concentration in hands of Bretton Woods' institutions as unfair and seeks to promote alternative models of development. They have targeted governance of IMF in every summit since 2009, including Goa. They have asked for a new quota formula that would ensure that the increased voice of the dynamic emerging and developing economies reflects their relative contributions to the world economy.
- BRICS agreed to intensify cooperation against terror groups like **IS in West Asia and North Africa region (WANA).**
- **BRICS Think Tanks Council (BTTC)** in 2013 was an important milestone in the institutionalization agenda.
- **South Africa to host BRICS office:** South Africa is set to reinforce its position as a regional economic hub as it prepares to open a regional office that would channel funding drawn from the New Development Bank (NDB) of the Brazil-Russia-China-India-South Africa (BRICS) grouping. The office to look at funding for South Africa and the nearby region. (The NDB's Africa Regional Centre opened in Johannesburg in 2016; regional offices have since been set up in São Paulo, Moscow and in Gujarat, India (2022).)

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

03 BRICS Bank { New Development Bank (NDB) }

- The **New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)**.
- **Membership (2026):** The NDB has **10 members** – the five founders plus **Bangladesh and the UAE (2021), Egypt (2023), Algeria (2025) and Uzbekistan (June 2026)**. Uruguay, Colombia, Ethiopia, Angola, Zimbabwe and Belarus have been admitted as prospective members and will join once they deposit their instruments of accession. Membership is open to all UN members, but the founders' share of capital cannot fall below 55%.
- According to the Agreement on the NDB, "the Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments." Moreover, the NDB "shall cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank."
- At the Fourth BRICS Summit in New Delhi (2012) the possibility of setting up a new Development Bank was considered to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies, as well as in developing countries.
- **During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB).**
- **Fortaleza Declaration** stressed that the NDB will strengthen cooperation among BRICS and will supplement the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development thus contributing to sustainable and balanced growth.
- NDB's key areas of operation are clean energy, transport infrastructure, irrigation, sustainable urban development and economic cooperation among the member countries.
- The NDB functions on a consultative mechanism among the BRICS members with **all the member countries possessing equal rights.**
- **Major Projects funded by NDB in India:**
  - It has committed funding to a number of **major infrastructure projects in India, including the Mumbai Metro rail, Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System and many Renewable Energy projects.**
  - The NDB has so far approved 14 Indian projects for an amount of nearly USD 4.2 billion. By September 2026, the NDB's project list carried **44 Indian projects** (2016–2026), among them the **Chennai Metro Phase II corridor, Lucknow Metro Phase 1B (2026), Hyderabad Elevated Corridor (2026)** and water supply projects in Guwahati and Kohima. Overall, the bank had approved **139 projects worth about US$ 42.9 billion** across its members.
  - In 2020, India announced a **1 billion USD loan pact with NDB** to boost rural employment and infrastructure.

Structure

- **New Development Bank will have an initial subscribed capital of $50 billion which will be raised to $100 billion.**

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- The five members will have an **equal share for each in the bank.** So, no one member dominates the institution.
- **Headquarters – Shanghai**
- Bank will have **African Regional Center** in South Africa (opened in Johannesburg in 2016).
- **India has assumed the first presidency of the bank.** The presidency rotates among the founding members: **K.V. Kamath (India, 2015–2020)**, **Marcos Troyjo (Brazil, 2020–2023)** and **Dilma Rousseff (Brazil, since March 2023)**, who continues as President in 2026.
- Chairman of Board of governors will be from Russia.
- **The emergency reserve fund-which was announced as a "Contingency Reserve Arrangement" will also have $100 billion and will help developing nations avoid short-term liquidity pressures.**
- It will have **$41 billion from China, $5 billion from South Africa and $ 18 billion from each of the remaining nations.**

WHAT IS THE CONTINGENT RESERVE ARRANGEMENT?

- Considering the **increasing instances of global financial crisis**, **BRICS nations signed BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) in 2014 as part of Fortaleza Declaration at Sixth BRICS summit.**
- The BRICS CRA aims to provide **short-term liquidity support to the members** through currency swaps to help mitigating BOP crisis situation and further strengthen financial stability.
- The **initial total committed resources of the CRA shall be one hundred billion dollars of the United States of America (USD 100 billion).**
- It would also contribute to strengthening the global financial safety net and complement existing international arrangements (IMF).

Rationale

- **Global financial institutions like IMF and world bank are dominated by US and western countries.**
- IMF and world bank follow **different voting power** based on quota system. Though China is second largest economy after US, it has fewer voting rights.
- The financial institution created by **BRICS will reduce the importance of US dollar as a global currency, and eventually it will increase importance of Yuan.**
- IMF cash assistance program is conditional. If a country's foreign policy clashes with US, then it will be difficult to obtain a loan.
- It will provide **resources for infrastructure development** of developing countries.

04 Challenges Associated with BRICS

- The marked **dominance of big three Russia-China-India** is challenge for the BRICS as it moves ahead. To become a true representative of large emerging markets across the world, BRICS must become pan-continental. Its membership must include more countries from other regions and continents.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- The **BRICS will need to expand its agenda for increasing its relevance in the global order.** As of now, climate change and development finance, aimed at building infrastructure dominate agenda.
- As **BRICS moves forward foundational principles of BRICS i.e. respect for sovereign equality and pluralism in global governance** are liable to be tested as the five member countries pursue their own national agendas.
- The military standoff between India and China on the Doklam plateau, which has effectively brought to an end the naive notion that a comfortable political relationship is always possible amongst the BRICS members.
- China's efforts to co-opt nation states, which are integral to its Belt and Road Initiative, into a broader political arrangement has potential to cause conflict among BRICS members especially China and India.
- **Heterogeneity**: It is claimed by critics that heterogeneity (variable/diverse nature of countries) of the BRICS nations with its diverse interests possess a threat to the viability of the grouping.
- **China Centric:** All the countries in the BRICS group trade with China more than each other, therefore it is blamed as a platform to promote China's interest. Balancing trade deficit with China is a huge challenge for other partner nations.
- **Not Been Effective:** The five-power combine has succeeded, albeit up to a point. However, China's economic rise has created a serious imbalance within BRICS.
  - Also the group has not done enough to assist the Global South to win their optimal support for their agenda.
- **Expansion strains:** Rapid enlargement (2024–25) has made consensus harder. Saudi Arabia's status remains ambiguous, and members with opposing interests sit together – the **BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi (May 2026) ended without a joint communiqué** over differences on the West Asia war, leaving India to issue a chair's statement. Russia said in May 2026 that BRICS would not rush further expansion.
- **Anti-West image and US pressure:** US President Donald Trump threatened 100% tariffs on countries pursuing a BRICS currency (November 2024, repeated in January 2025). India has stressed that BRICS is non-Western rather than anti-Western, and the New Delhi Declaration (2026) did not create any common currency.
- **Sanctions on members:** In March 2022 the NDB put new transactions with Russia on hold, showing how Western sanctions limit even BRICS institutions.

05 Importance of BRICS for India

- **Geo-Politics:** Present geopolitics has made it difficult for India to carve a middle path for **balancing its strategic interests between the U.S and the Russia-China axis.**
  - Therefore, the BRICS platform provides an opportunity for India to **balance the Russia-China axis.**
- **Global Economic Order:** BRICS countries shared a common objective of reforming the international financial and monetary system, with a strong desire to build a more just, and balanced international order
  - To this end, the BRICS community **plays an important role in the G20**, in shaping global economic policies and promoting financial stability.
- **Terrorism**: BRICS also provides a platform for India to galvanize its efforts against terrorism.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Global Grouping:** India is actively pursuing its membership for the **United Nation Security Council (UNSC)** and **Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG).**
  - China forms the major roadblock in pursuing such goals.
  - Therefore, BRICS provides an opportunity to actively engage with China and resolve the mutual disputes. It also helps in garnering support of other partner countries.
- **India's 2026 Chairship:** India held the BRICS presidency from 1 January 2026, with more than 400 meetings in 30 Indian cities, and used it to push counter-terrorism language, reform of global governance, artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure and the concerns of the Global South.

Recent Initiatives of BRICS

- **BRICS Media Forum: In March 2022, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) launched a three-month-long training programme for journalists.**
  - The programme was an initiative of the BRICS Media Forum.
- **BRICS Meeting on Climate Change**: In May 2022, the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change participated in the BRICS **high-level meeting on Climate Change.**
  - In the meeting, India highlighted the relevance of the forum to jointly address climate change, to explore approaches to accelerate low-carbon and resilient transition, and to achieve sustainable recovery and development.
- **Payments and finance (2024–2026):** Work on cross-border payments in local currencies began under Russia's chair (Kazan, 2024) and continues through the **BRICS Payment Task Force**; the 2026 declaration asked the NDB to expand local-currency lending.
- **New Delhi outcomes (2026):** A **BRICS Incubator Network**, further work on a **Startup Innovation Fund**, a **BRICS Mission for Healthy Lifestyle**, cooperation on AI, digital public infrastructure and quantum technology, and the **BRICS–NDB Knowledge Portal** (launched in September 2026).

06 Way Forward

- As the BRICS grouping continues its institution building mission, **it is important to remember that equity, redress and fairness should become crosscutting ideals informing all initiatives.**
  - Opting out of existing groupings will simply allow China a free hand (even in those organizations where it is not a member but has loyal proxies). Instead, it might be better for India to remain engaged and to counter China wherever possible.
- Clearly, **there is a need to revive the forgotten India, Brazil, South Africa group (IBSA)-perhaps enlarge it to include Turkey, Indonesia, South Korea** and the like to develop alternatives to China-centric groupings.
- Similarly, **India also needs to invest more in building groups that bridge the north-south divide**. One such group is the **G4 (Brazil, India, Germany and Japan)** aspirants to the UN Security Council.
  - The group has solely focused on UNSC till now, might be time for them to enlarge agenda to other avenues.
- BRICS countries should now begin to **work together on establishing Free Trade Area (FTA).**
- **BRICS, like ASEAN and SCO, can invite 'dialogue partners and observers' from various parts of the globe**, especially from the developing countries. This would provide them with greater responsibility of the

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

developing countries, and might give them with a much needed enthusiasm to fast track processes and institutionalization. (A "partner country" tier was created at Kazan in 2024; the task now is to absorb new members and partners without losing coherence.)

- BRICS did well in its first decade to identify issues of common interests and to create platforms to address these issues. For BRICS to remain relevant over the next decade, **each of its members must make a realistic assessment of the initiative's opportunities and inherent limitations.**
- BRICS nations need to recalibrate their approach and to **recommit to their founding ethos**. BRICS must **reaffirm their commitment to a multi-polar world** that allows for sovereign equality and democratic decision making by doing so can they address the asymmetry of power within the group and in global governance generally.
- **They must build on the success of the NDB and invest in additional BRICS institutions.** It will be useful for BRICS to **develop an institutional research wing, along the lines of the OECD**, offering solutions which are better suited to the developing world.
- BRICS should consider a BRICS-led effort to **meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change and the UN's sustainable development goals**. This could include e.g. setting up a BRICS energy alliance and an energy policy institution.
- NDB in partnership with other development finance institutions could be a potent vehicle to finance progress towards the sustainable development goals amongst the BRICS members.
- **Idea of setting up a BRICS Credit Rating Agency (BCRA)** as proposed by India, opposed to Western agencies like Standard & Poor's, Moody's etc can be on BRICS future agenda.

Previous Year Questions

2026 — MAINS · GS PAPER II · 10 MARKS

"BRICS acts as a powerful counterweight in global governance, actively amplifying the voice and influence of the Global South." Explain the role of BRICS in projecting itself as an alternative to other groupings.

2014 — MAINS · GS PAPER II · 12.5 MARKS

India has recently signed to become founding member of New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different ? Discuss the strategic significance of these two Banks for India.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

2025 PRELIMS

Consider the following statements with regard to BRICS :
I. 16th BRICS Summit was held under the Chairship of Russia in Kazan.
II. Indonesia has become a full member of BRICS.
III. The theme of the 16th BRICS Summit was Strengthening Multiculturalism for Just Global Development and Security.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a **I and II** | b II and III | c I and III | d I only

Answer: (a). Russia hosted the 16th summit at Kazan (October 2024) and Indonesia became a full member in January 2025; the theme was 'Strengthening Multilateralism', not 'Multiculturalism'.

2016 PRELIMS

Consider the following statements :
1. New Development Bank has been set up by APEC.
2. The headquarters of New Development Bank is in Shanghai.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | **b** **2 only** | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). The New Development Bank was set up by BRICS (not APEC) and is headquartered in Shanghai.

2015 PRELIMS

'The Fortaleza Declaration', recently in the news, is related to the affairs of

a ASEAN | **b** **BRICS** | c OECD | d WTO

Answer: (b). The Fortaleza Declaration came out of the 6th BRICS Summit in Brazil (July 2014), which agreed to set up the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

2014 PRELIMS

With reference to a grouping of countries known as BRICS, consider the following statements :
1. The First Summit of BRICS was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2009.
2. South Africa was the last to join the BRICS grouping.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a 1 only | **b** **2 only** | c Both 1 and 2 | d Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). The first BRIC summit was held at Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009; South Africa joined in 2010 and was the last to join at the time of the exam (the group expanded from 2024).

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

UNIT 05 | 25 CHAPTERS

International Institutions, Agencies and Fora

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

CHAPTERS

75	United Nations	133
76	United Nations Specialised Agencies	156
77	United Nations Principal Organs	167
78	United Nation Security Council	176
79	United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)	180
80	International Court of Justice (ICJ)	184
81	International Criminal Court (ICC)	191
82	World Bank Group	198
83	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	210
84	World Trade Organisation (WTO)	221
85	UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization)	239
86	UN Peacekeeping Forces	247
87	World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)	255
88	International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)	259
89	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	264
90	World Health Organization (WHO)	272
91	International Labour Organization (ILO)	284
92	UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)	290

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

93	International Solar Alliance (ISA)	295
94	Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	301
95	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	307
96	Arctic Council & India's Arctic Policy	314
97	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	323
98	International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)	327
99	Collective Security Treaty Organization	333

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

GS PAPER II | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS · PART 2

75

United Nations

CONTENTS

01 Funds and Programmes
02 UN's Contribution to World
03 UN's Cooperation with India
04 Recent Developments (2024–2026)
05 Conclusion
06 Previous Year Questions

- The United Nations (UN) is an **international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States.**
- Its mission and work guided by the **purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter and implemented by its various organs and specialised agencies.**
- Its activities include **maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.**

History of UN Foundation

- In **1899,** the **International Peace Conference** was held in The **Hague** to elaborate instruments for settling crises peacefully, preventing wars and codifying rules of warfare.
  - It adopted the **Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes** and established the **Permanent Court of Arbitration,** which began work in 1902. This court was the forerunner of UN International Court of Justice.
- The forerunner of the United Nations was the **League of Nations,** an organization conceived in circumstances of the First World War, and established in 1919 under the **Treaty of Versailles** "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security."
  - **The International Labour Organization (ILO)** was also created in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles as an **affiliated agency of the League**.
- The name **"United Nations", coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt**. A document called The **Declaration by United Nations** was signed in 1942 by 26 nations, pledging their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers (Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis) and bound them against making a separate peace.
- **United Nations Conference on International Organization** (1945)
  - Conference held in San Francisco (USA), was attended by representatives of 50 countries and signed the **United Nations Charter**.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **The UN Charter of 1945** is the **foundational treaty of the United Nations,** as an inter-governmental organization.

Components of the UN

The **main organs of the UN are**

1. the **General Assembly,**
2. the **Security Council,**
3. the **Economic and Social Council,**
4. the **Trusteeship Council,**
5. the **International Court of Justice,**
6. and the **UN Secretariat**

All the **6 were established in 1945** when the UN was founded.

01 Funds and Programmes

UNICEF

- **The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),** originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II.
- In **1950,** UNICEF's **mandate was extended** to address the long-term **needs of children and women in developing countries** everywhere.
- In 1953, it became a permanent part of the United Nations System, and the words "international" and "emergency" were dropped from the organization's name, though it retained the original acronym, "UNICEF".
- **Executive Board:** A 36-member board establishes policies, approves programs and oversees administrative and financial plans. The members are government representatives who are elected by the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC),** usually for three-year terms.
- UNICEF relies on **contributions** from governments and private donors.
- **UNICEF's Supply Division** is based in **Copenhagen** (Denmark) and serves as the primary point of distribution for such essential items as vaccines, antiretroviral medicines for children and mothers with HIV, nutritional supplements, emergency shelters, family reunification, and educational supplies.
- **UNICEF's Recent Initiatives:**
  - **Children's Climate Risk Index**
  - **First Global Report on Assistive Technology (GReAT).**

UNFPA

- **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),** formerly the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, is the United Nations **sexual and reproductive health agency**.
  - The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) establishes its mandate.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

  - UNFPA works directly to tackle **Sustainable Development Goals** on health (SDG3), education (SDG4) and gender equality (SDG5)
- Its mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, 'every childbirth is safe' and every young person's potential is fulfilled.
- In 2018, UNFPA launched efforts to achieve three transformative results, ambitions that promise to change the world for every man, woman and young person:
  - Ending unmet need for family planning
  - Ending preventable maternal death
  - Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices
- **UNFPA Publication:**
  - **State of World Population Report**

UNDP

- The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the UN's global development network.
- UNDP was established in 1965 by the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries.
- The **UNDP Executive Board** is made up of representatives from 36 countries around the world who serve on a rotating basis.
- It is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member nations.
- UNDP is central to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG),** a network that spans 165 countries and unites the 40 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other bodies working to advance the 2030 **Agenda for Sustainable Development**.
- **UNDP Publication: Human Development Index**

UNEP

- The **United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)** is a global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system.
- It was founded by UN General Assembly as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in June 1972.
- **UNEP and World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** established **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** in 1988 to assess climate change based on the latest science.
- Since its founding, the UNEP has played a key role for the development of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The secretariats for the following nine MEAs are currently hosted by UNEP:
  - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
  - Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
  - Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer
  - Minamata Convention on Mercury

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

  - Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
  - Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
  - Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
- Headquarters: **Nairobi, Kenya**
- **Publications:**
  - **'Making Peace with Nature' report**
  - **Emission Gap Report**
  - **Adaptation Gap Report**
  - **Global Environment Outlook**
  - Frontiers
  - Invest into Healthy Planet
- **Major Campaigns:**
  - Beat Pollution
  - UN75
  - **World Environment Day**
  - Wild for Life.
- **United Nations Environment Assembly**
  - The **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** is the **governing body of the UN Environment Programme.**
  - It is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
  - It **meets biennially** to set priorities for global environmental policies and develop international environmental law.
  - It was **created in June 2012,** during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20.

UN-HABITAT

- **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future.
- Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.
- It was established in 1978 as an outcome of the First **UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I)** in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976.
- **2nd United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)** in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996, set the twin goals of the Habitat Agenda:
  - Adequate shelter for all
  - Development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)** was held in 2016 in Quito, Ecuador. It elaborated on **Goal-11 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable**.
- UN-Habitat maintains its headquarters at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya.
- Recently, the **UN-Habitat has identified issues associated with Jaipur city like multi hazard vulnerabilities,** weak mobility and Green-Blue economy and has laid out a plan to increase sustainability in the city.

WFP

- **World Food Programme (WFP)** is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.
- The WFP was established in 1963 by the **FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organization)** and the **United Nations General Assembly**.
- **WFP Initiatives:**
  - **Share the Meal**
  - **Global Report on Food Crisis**
    - **The report is the flagship publication of the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC). and is facilitated by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) which is a** global initiative co-sponsored by FAO, WFP and **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).**
  - In Feb 2022, India signed an agreement with the WFP for the **distribution of 50,000 MT of wheat that it has committed to sending to Afghanistan** as part of a **humanitarian assistance.**

02 UN's Contribution to World

Peace and Security

- **Maintaining Peace and Security:** By sending peacekeeping and observer missions to the world's trouble spots over the past six decades, the United Nations has been able to restore calm, allowing many countries to recover from conflict.
- **Preventing Nuclear Proliferation:** For over the five decades, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has served as the world's nuclear inspector. IAEA experts work to verify that safeguarded nuclear material is used only for peaceful purposes. To date, the Agency has safeguards agreements with more than 180 States.
- **Supporting Disarmament:** UN treaties are the legal backbone of disarmament efforts:
  - the **Chemical Weapons Convention-1997** has been ratified by 193 States (2026),
  - the **Mine-Ban Convention-1997** by 162 (2026 – after Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Poland withdrew in 2025–26),
  - and the **Arms Trade Treaty-2014** by 118 (2026).
  - At the local level, UN peacekeepers often work to implement disarmament agreements between warring parties.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Preventing genocide:** The United Nations brought about the first-ever treaty to combat genocide—acts committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.
  - **The 1948 Genocide Convention** has been ratified by 154 States (2026), which commits to prevent and punish actions of genocide in war and in peacetime. The UN tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as UN-supported courts in Cambodia, have put would-be genocide perpetrators on notice that such crimes would no longer be tolerated.
- **Uniting for Peace Resolution:** About: **UN General Assembly resolution 377(V)** is known as the Uniting for peace resolution which was adopted in 1950.
  - The most important part of resolution is section A which states that where the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the General Assembly shall seize itself of the matter.
  - The Uniting for Peace resolution was **initiated by the United States,** in October 1950, as a means of **circumventing further Soviet vetoes** during the course of the **Korean War.**
  - Building on the same idea, the General Assembly adopted the **"veto initiative"** (resolution 76/262) on **26 April 2022**: its President must convene a debate within **10 working days** whenever a permanent member casts a veto in the Security Council.

Economic Development

- **Promoting Development:** Since 2000, promoting living standards and human skills and potential throughout the world have been guided by the **Millennium Development Goals**.
  - The UN Development Programme **(UNDP)** supports more than 4,800 projects to reduce poverty, promote good governance, address crises and preserve the environment.
  - The UN Children's Fund **(UNICEF)** works in more than 150 countries, primarily on child protection, immunization, girls' education and emergency aid.
  - The UN Conference on Trade and Development **(UNCTAD)** helps developing countries make the most of their **trade opportunities**.
  - **The World Bank** provides developing countries with loans and grants, and has supported more than 12,000 projects in more than 170 countries since 1947.
- **Alleviating Rural Poverty:** The International Fund for Agricultural Development **(IFAD)** provides low-interest loans and grants to very poor rural people.
- **Focusing on African Development:** Africa continues to be a high priority for the United Nations. The continent receives **36 per cent of UN system expenditures** for development, the largest share among the world's regions. All UN agencies have special programmes to benefit Africa.
- Promoting Women's Well-being: **UN Women** is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- **Fighting Hunger:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN **(FAO)** leads global efforts to defeat hunger. FAO also helps developing countries **to modernize and improve agriculture,** forestry and fisheries practices in ways that conserve natural resources and improve nutrition.
- **Commitment in Support of Children: UNICEF** has pioneered to provide **vaccines** and other aid desperately needed by children caught in armed conflict. **The Convention on the Rights of the Child-1989** has become law in nearly all countries.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Tourism:** The World Tourism Organization (now branded **UN Tourism**) is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
  - Its **Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** seeks to maximize the benefits of tourism while minimizing its negative impact.
- **Global Think Tank:** The United Nations is at the forefront of research that seeks solutions to global problems.
  - **The UN Population Division** is a leading source of information and research on global population trends, producing up-to-date demographic estimates and projections.
  - **The UN Statistics Division** is the hub of the global statistical system, compiling and disseminating global economic, demographic, social, gender, environment and energy statistics.
  - **The United Nations Development Programme's** annual **Human Development Report** provides independent, empirically grounded analyses of major development issues, trends and policies, including the groundbreaking **Human Development Index**.
  - The United Nations **World Economic and Social Survey,** the Word Bank's **World Development Report,** the International Monetary Fund's **World Economic Outlook** and other studies help policymakers to make informed decisions.

Social Development

- **Preserving Historic, Cultural, Architectural and Natural Sites:** The **UNESCO** has helped 137 countries to protect ancient monuments and historic, cultural and natural sites.
  - It has negotiated international conventions to preserve cultural property, cultural diversity and outstanding cultural and natural sites. More than 1,000 such sites have been designated as having exceptional universal value – as **World Heritage Sites**. After the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee (Busan, July 2026), the list has **1,273 sites in 173 countries**.
- Taking the lead on global issues:
  - The first **United Nations conference on the environment** (Stockholm, 1972) helped to alert world public opinion on the dangers faced by our planet, triggering action by governments.
  - The first **world conference on women** (Mexico City, 1975) put women's right, equality and progress on the global agenda.
  - Other landmark events include the first international conference on human rights (Teheran, 1968), the first **world population conference** (Bucharest, 1974) and the first **world climate conference** (Geneva, 1979).
  - Those events **brought together experts and policymakers, as well as activists,** from around the world, prompting sustained global action.
  - Regular follow-up conferences have helped to **sustain the momentum**.

Human Rights

- UN General Assembly adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948**.
  - It has helped to enact dozens of legally binding agreements on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.
  - UN human rights bodies have focused world **attention on cases of torture, disappearance, arbitrary detention** and other violations.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Fostering Democracy:** The UN promotes and strengthens democratic institutions and practices around the world, including by helping people in many countries to participate in free and fair elections.
  - In the 1990s, the UN organized or observed landmark elections in Cambodia, El Salvador, South Africa, Mozambique and Timor-Leste.
  - More recently, the UN has provided crucial assistance in elections in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sudan.
- **Ending Apartheid in South Africa:** By imposing measures ranging from an arms embargo to a convention against segregated sporting events, the United Nations was a major factor in bringing about the downfall of the apartheid system.
  - In 1994, elections in which all South Africans were allowed to participate on an equal basis led to the establishment of a **multiracial Government**.
- **Promoting Women's Rights:** The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by 189 countries, has helped to promote the rights of women worldwide.

Environment

- **Climate change** is a global problem that demands a global solution. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change **(IPCC)**, which brings together 2,000 leading climate change scientists, issues comprehensive scientific assessments every five or six years.
  - IPCC was established in 1988 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme **(UNEP)** and the **World Meteorological Organization** for the purpose of assessing "the scientific, technical and socioeconomic information relevant for the understanding of the risk of human-induced climate change.
  - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides foundation for UN members to negotiate agreements to reduce emissions that contribute to climate change and help countries adapt to its effects. (**UNFCCC-1992** is an international environmental treaty adopted and opened for signature at the **Earth Summit** in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992.)
  - **Global Environment Facility,** which brings together 10 UN agencies, funds projects in developing countries.
- **Protecting the Ozone Layer:** The UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have been **instrumental in highlighting** the damage caused to Earth's **ozone layer**.
  - **Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer-1985** provided the framework necessary to create regulatory measures for international reductions in the production of chlorofluorocarbons. Convention provided foundation for Montreal protocol.
  - **The Montreal Protocol-1987** is an international environmental agreement with universal ratification to protect the earth's ozone layer by eliminating use of ozone depleting substances (ODS) such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons.
    - **Kigali amendment (to the Montreal Protocol)-2016:** was adopted to phase down production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) worldwide.
- **Banning Toxic Chemicals: The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants-2001** seeks to rid the world of some of the most dangerous chemicals ever created.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

International Law

- **Prosecuting War Criminals:** By prosecuting and convicting war criminals, the **UN tribunals established for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda** have helped to expand international humanitarian and international criminal law dealing with genocide and other violations of international law.
  - **The International Criminal Court** is an independent permanent court that investigates and prosecutes persons accused of the most serious international crimes—genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes—**if national authorities are unwilling or unable to do so**.
- **Helping to Resolve Major International Disputes:** By delivering judgments and advisory opinions, the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** has helped to settle international disputes involving territorial questions, maritime boundaries, diplomatic relations, State responsibility, the treatment of aliens and the use of force, among others.
- **Stability and Order in the World's Oceans:**
  - **The 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,** which has gained nearly universal acceptance, provides the **legal framework** for all activities in the oceans and seas.
  - It also includes mechanisms for settling disputes.
  - Its third implementing agreement, on **Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ, the "High Seas Treaty")**, adopted in June 2023, **entered into force on 17 January 2026**; it had 104 parties by 2026. India signed it on 25 September 2024.
- **Climate Change and International Law:** On **23 July 2025** the ICJ delivered its advisory opinion on the **Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change**, requested by the General Assembly.
- **Combating International Crime: The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** works with countries and organizations to counter transnational organized crime by providing legal and technical assistance to fight corruption, money-laundering, drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants, as well as by strengthening criminal justice systems.
  - It has played a key role in brokering and implementing relevant international Treaties, such as the **UN Convention against Corruption-2005** and the **UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime-2003**.
  - It works to reduce the supply of and demand for **illicit drugs** under the three main **UN conventions on drug control**:
    - the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 (amended 1972),
    - the Convention on Psychotropic Substances-1971,
    - and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances-1988
- **Encouraging Creativity and Innovation:** The World Intellectual Property Organization **(WIPO)** promotes the protection of intellectual property rights and ensures that all countries are in a position to harness the benefits of an effective intellectual property system.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

Humanitarian Affairs

- **Assisting refugees:** Refugees fleeing **persecution, violence and war** have received aid from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees **(UNHCR)**.
  - UNHCR seeks long-term or "durable" solutions by helping refugees **repatriate** to their homelands, if conditions warrant, or by helping them to integrate in their countries of **asylum** or to resettle in third countries.
  - Refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons, mostly women and children, are receiving food, shelter, medical aid, education, and repatriation assistance from the UN.
- **Aiding Palestinian Refugees:** UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East **(UNRWA)**, a relief and human development agency, has **assisted four generations of Palestinian refugees** with education, health care, social services, microfinance and emergency aid.
- **Reducing the Effects of Natural Disasters:** The World Meteorological Organization **(WMO)** has helped to spare millions of people from the calamitous effects of natural and man-made disasters.
  - Its early warning system, which includes thousands of surface monitors, as well as satellites,
    - has made it possible to predict with greater accuracy **weather-related disasters**,
    - has provided information on the **dispersal of oil spills** and chemical and nuclear leaks and has predicted long-term droughts.
- **Providing Food to the Neediest:** The World Food Programme **(WFP)** is fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

Health

- **Promoting Reproductive and Maternal Health:** United Nations Population Fund **(UNFPA)** is promoting the right of individuals to make their own decisions on the number and spacing of their children through **voluntary family planning programmes**.
- **Responding to HIV/AIDS:** United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS **(UNAIDS)** coordinates global action against an epidemic that affects about 41 million people (2025).
- **Wiping Out Polio: Poliomyelitis** has been eliminated from all but two countries—Afghanistan and Pakistan, where wild poliovirus is still endemic (2026)—as a result of the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative**. Nigeria, earlier the third endemic country, has since been freed of wild polio.
- **Eradicating Smallpox:** A 13-year effort by the World Health Organization (WHO) resulted in smallpox being declared officially **eradicated from the planet in 1980**.
- **Fighting Tropical Diseases:**
  - WHO programme – **African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control** reduced levels of river blindness (onchocerciasis) in 10 West African countries while **opening up 25 million hectares of fertile land to farming**.
    - **Guinea-worm disease** is on the verge of being eradicated.
    - **Schistosomiasis** and **sleeping sickness** are now under control.
    - **Halting the Spread of Epidemics**
  - Some of the more prominent diseases for which WHO is leading the global response for some of the more prominent diseases including **Ebola, meningitis, yellow fever,** cholera and influenza, including avian influenza.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Preparing for Future Pandemics:** On **20 May 2025** the World Health Assembly adopted the **WHO Pandemic Agreement** by consensus. It will open for signature once an annex on **Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS)** is adopted, and will enter into force after 60 ratifications.

03 UN's Cooperation with India

UN Contribution to India

- United Nations agencies, offices, programmes and funds working in India comprise one of the largest **UN field networks** anywhere in the world.
- **The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT):**
  - APCTT founded in 1977 at New Delhi, is a Regional Institute of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific **(UNESCAP)** with a geographic focus of the entire Asia-Pacific region.
  - Centre has focused on three specific areas of activity: technology information; technology transfer; and innovation management.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**
  - 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.
  - Over the years, FAO's contribution has extended to issues such as access to food, nutrition, livelihoods, rural development and sustainable agriculture.
  - With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), much of FAO's focus in India will be on **sustainable agricultural practices**.
- **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):**
  - IFAD and the Government of India have achieved significant results investing in the **commercialization** of **smallholding-agriculture** and building small farmers' capacity to increase incomes from market opportunities.
  - IFAD-supported projects have also provided women with access to financial services, such as by linking women's self-help groups with commercial banks.
- **International Labour Organization (ILO):**
  - The first ILO Office in India started in 1928. There are 43 ILO conventions and 1 protocol ratified by India.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- IOM assisted Indian citizens who were among the thousands of people displaced by the **Persian Gulf War (1990s)**.
- 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 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.

- UNESCO – Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development **(MGIEP)**:
  - MGIEP is an integral part of UNESCO, established with generous support from the Government of India in 2012 in New Delhi.
  - The Institute's global mandate is to **transform education policies and practices** by developing **innovative teaching and learning methods**.
  - It works for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 – "education for building peaceful and sustainable societies across the world".
  - A project **'Rethinking Schooling'** was launched by UNESCO-MGIEP with the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in 2016-17.
  - **The first review of SDGs (4.7) by MGIEP,** was released in **Rethinking Schooling for the 21st century**.
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women **(UN-Women)**:
  - 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 peace-builders and negotiators.
  - UN Women advocates for greater participation of women in politics and decision-making, and **works with planning bodies such as NITI Aayog** to ensure that policies and budgets reflect the needs of women.
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS **(UNAIDS)**: Its mission is to help prevent new HIV infections, care for people living with HIV and mitigate the impact of the epidemic.
- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):**
  - In the 1950s and 1960s, UNDP helped establish institutions of major national importance, including **space centres and nuclear research laboratories**.
  - 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**.
- **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP):**
  - In December 2011, a new South and South-West Asia office of ESCAP was inaugurated in New Delhi to serve 10 countries in the sub-region.
  - 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.
- **UNESCO**
  - In India, UNESCO has provided technical support to several premier educational institutions.
  - As part of its **World Heritage programme,** it has recognized 45 World Heritage Sites in India (2026), such as the Taj Mahal and the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh; 13 of them were inscribed in the past decade.
  - 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.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**
  - Currently, UNFPA is placing greater emphasis on policy development and advocacy reflecting India's middle-income status.
  - It raises **awareness about demographic shifts towards older populations** and about the need to harness the opportunities and address the **challenges of population ageing**.
- United Nations Commission on Human Settlements **(UN-Habitat)**
  - UN-Habitat promotes socially and environmentally **sustainable towns and cities** with the goal of providing **adequate shelter for all**.
  - 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 "World Cities Report 2016"**
    - As per **Census 2011, 377 million Indians** comprising 31.1% of the total population lived in **urban areas**.
    - This is estimated to have risen to **420 million in 2015**.
  - **UN-Habitat-New Urban agenda (NUA)-2017** addresses **Goal-11 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
  - India launched the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation **(Amrut), Smart Cities, Hriday** (National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana), and **Swachh Bharat** prominently **allied to the goals of the UN-Habitat-NUA**.
- United Nation Children's Fund **(UNICEF)**
  - In 1954, UNICEF signed an agreement with the Government of India to fund the **Aarey and Anand milk processing plants**. In return, free and subsidised milk would be provided to needy children in the area.
    - Within a decade, India had thirteen UNICEF assisted milk processing plants.
    - Today, India has become the world's largest producer of milk.
  - **Polio Campaign-2012:** The Government, in partnership with UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **contributed to almost universal awareness of the need to vaccinate all children under five** against polio.
    - As a result of these efforts, India was removed from the list of polio-endemic countries in 2012 and was certified polio-free by WHO in 2014.
  - 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 programme, **Integrated Approach Programme on Sustainable Cities-2017** funded by the **Global Environment Facility** and co-implemented by the **World Bank** and **UNIDO**.
- **World Food Programme (WFP)**
  - WFP is working to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of India's own **subsidized food distribution system,** which brings supplies of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene oil to around 800 million poor people across the country.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **World Health Organization (WHO)**
  - India became a party to the WHO Constitution on 12 January 1948.
    - The WHO Country Office for India is headquartered in Delhi with country-wide presence.
  - 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.
  - **The WHO Country Cooperation Strategy – India (2012-2017)** has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and the WHO Country Office for India (WCO).
- 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.
  - 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.
- **United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)**
  - Under the scheme of partition provided by the **Indian Independence Act of 1947,** Kashmir was free to accede to India or Pakistan. Its accession to India became a matter of dispute between the two countries and fighting broke out later that year.
  - In January 1948, the Security Council adopted resolution 39, establishing the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan **(UNCIP)** to investigate and mediate the dispute.
  - **The first team of unarmed military observers,** which eventually **formed** the nucleus of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan **(UNMOGIP)**, arrived in the mission area in January 1949 to supervise, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, **the ceasefire** between India and Pakistan and to assist the Military Adviser to UNCIP.
  - At the end of 1971, hostilities broke out again between India and Pakistan. UNMOGIP started along the borders of East Pakistan and were related to the movement for independence, which had developed in that region and which ultimately led to the creation of Bangladesh.
  - The last report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNMOGIP was published in 1972.
  - Since 1972, India has adopted a **non-recognition policy towards third parties** in their bilateral exchanges with Pakistan over the question regarding the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
    - The military authorities of Pakistan have continued to lodge alleged ceasefire violations complaints with UNMOGIP.
    - The military authorities of India have lodged no complaints since January 1972 limiting the activities of the UN observers on the Indian-administered side of the Line of Control, though they continue to provide necessary security, transport and other services to UNMOGIP.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime **(UNODC)**
  - 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.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development **(UNCTAD)**
  - **Invest India,** the country's investment promotion body, has won **United Nations (UN) Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development-2018**.
    - The awards are given annually by UNCTAD since 2002 as part of its investment promotion and facilitation.
  - India's consistently strong voice for the developing world has made it a major player with UNCTAD, spanning a multiplicity of economic reforms.

India's contribution to UN

- India was one of the original members of the League of Nations. As a signatory of **the Treaty of Versailles-1919,** India was granted automatic entry to the League of Nations.
  - India was represented by her Secretary of State, Edwin Samuel Montagu; the Maharaja of Bikaner Sir Ganga Singh; Satyendra Prasanno Sinha, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for India.
- India was among the original members of the United Nations that signed the **Declaration by United Nations** at Washington, D.C. on 1 January 1942. This declaration became the basis of the United Nations (UN), which was formalized in the **United Nations Charter** signed by 50 countries in 1945.
- By 1946, India had started raising concerns regarding **colonialism, apartheid** and **racial discrimination**.
- India was among the most outspoken critics of apartheid and racial discrimination (discriminatory treatment of Indians in the Union of South Africa) in South Africa, being the first country to have raised the issue in the UN in 1946.
- India took an active part in Drafting of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948**.
- Its experience with the UN had not always been positive. On **Kashmir issue,** Nehru's faith in the UN and adherence to its principles proved costly as UN that was packed with **pro-Pakistani partisan powers**.
- **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** was elected the **first woman President of the UN General Assembly** in 1953.
- India's status as a **founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** and the **Group of 77 (G-77)** cemented its position within the UN system as a leading advocate of the concerns and aspirations of developing countries and the creation of a **more equitable international** economic and political order.
- It involved in conflict with China (1962), two wars (1965, 1971) with Pakistan and entered a period of **political instability**, economic stagnation, **food shortages** and near-**famine** conditions.
  - India's role diminished in the UN which came both as a result of its image and a deliberate decision by the post-Nehru political leadership **to adopt a low profile** at the UN and **speak only on vital Indian interests**.
- India has been a member of the UN Security Council for eight terms (a total of 16 years), with the most recent being the 2021–22 term. On 13 July 2026 it launched its candidature for the 2028–29 term.

- India is a member of **G4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan)**, a group of nations who back each other in seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council and advocate in favour of the reformation of the UNSC.
  - The Russian Federation, United States, United Kingdom and France support India and the other G4 countries gaining permanent seats.
- India is also part of the G-77.
  - The Group of 77 (G-77) was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries signatories of the **"Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries"**.
  - It is designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations.
  - Because of the historical significance, the name G-77 has been kept despite the group's growth to include more than 130 countries.
- **UN peacekeeping missions:** From protecting civilians, disarming ex-combatants and helping countries transition from conflict to peace, India has served the cause of peace.
  - In 2019, India was the third largest troop contributor with 6593 personnel deployed with UN Peacekeeping Missions (Lebanon, Congo, Sudan and South Sudan, Golan Heights, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Liberia).
  - In 2026, India was among the **top three troop contributors**, with nearly 4,300 personnel in 9 of the 11 active missions, including South Sudan (UNMISS), Lebanon (UNIFIL), the DR Congo (MONUSCO), Abyei (UNISFA) and the Golan Heights (UNDOF). In all, it has sent **more than 3,00,000 troops to over 53 missions** – the highest of any country.
  - India has suffered the highest number of fatalities (164 out of close to 3,800 personnel) among countries that have sent forces to the United Nations peacekeeping mission since 1948. By July 2026, **184 Indian peacekeepers** had made the supreme sacrifice.
  - India hosted the **Conclave of Army Chiefs of UN Troop Contributing Countries** in New Delhi on 14–16 October 2025, and in 2025 two Indian peacekeepers received the **Dag Hammarskjöld Medal** posthumously.
- **Mahatma Gandhi** has had a lasting influence on the United Nations. His ideals of non-violence deeply influenced the United Nations at the time of its inception.
  - In 2007, the United Nations declared 2nd October, Mahatma's Gandhi's birthday, as the **International day of non-violence**.
- In 2014, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution commemorating **21 June** as the **International Yoga Day**.
  - It recognises the holistic benefits of this timeless practice and its inherent compatibility with the principles and values of the United Nations.
- **Plea for International Equality Day:** In 2016, with focus on **combating inequalities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, B. R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary** was observed at the United Nations for the first time. India has made a plea to declare **April 14** as International Equality Day.
- At India's proposal, the UN General Assembly declared **2023 the International Year of Millets**, and India was part of the core group behind the resolution of December 2024 declaring **21 December as World Meditation Day**.
- India was elected to the **Human Rights Council for 2026–28** (its seventh term) and to **ECOSOC for 2026–28**.

- India pays its assessed dues in full and on time and is on the UN's "Honour Roll"; it contributed **US$ 35.18 million (about 1.1%)** to the UN regular budget for 2026.

Challenges are Faced by the UN & What Reforms can be Brought?

UN Administrative & Financial–Resources Challenges

- **Development Reform: Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)** will require bold changes to the UN Development System (UNDS) for the emergence of a **new generation of country teams,** centred on a strategic UN Development Assistance Framework and led by an impartial, independent and empowered resident coordinator.
- **Management Reform:** To confront **global challenges and to remain relevant in a fast-changing** world, United Nations must empower managers and staff, simplifies processes, increases accountability and transparency and improves on the delivery of our mandates.
  - There are concerns for improving efficiency, avoidance of duplication, and the minimization of waste in the functioning of the entire UN system.
- **Financial Resources:** Contributions of the Member States should have, as their fundamental underpinning, the capacity to pay principle.
  - The Member States should pay their contributions unconditionally, in full and on time, as delays in payments have caused an unprecedented financial crisis in the UN system.
  - **Financial reforms** hold the key to the future of the world body. **Without sufficient resources,** the UN's activities and role would suffer.

Peace and Security issues

- **Threats to Peace and Security:** The range of potential threats to peace and security that UN has to face, are following-
  - poverty, disease, and environmental breakdown (the threats to human security identified in the **Millennium Development Goals**),
  - conflict between states,
  - violence and massive human rights violations within states,
  - terrorism threats from organized crime,
  - and the proliferation of weapons – particularly WMD, but also conventional.
- **Terrorism:** Nations that support groups that are widely linked to terrorism, such as Pakistan, are not held accountable specifically for these actions. To this date, the UN still does not have a clear definition of terrorism, and they have no plans to pursue one.
- **Nuclear Proliferation:** In 1970, the **nuclear non-proliferation treaty** was signed by 190 nations. Despite this treaty, nuclear stockpiles remain high, and numerous nations continue to develop these devastating weapons. **The failure of the non-proliferation treaty details the ineffectiveness of the United Nations** and their inability to enforce crucial rules and regulations on offending nations.

Security Council Reforms

- **Composition of Security Council:** It has remained largely **static,** while the UN General Assembly membership has expanded considerably.
  - In 1965, the membership of the Security Council was expanded from 11 to 15. There was no change in the number of permanent members. Since then, the size of the Council has remained frozen.
  - This has undermined the representative character of the Council. An expanded Council, which is more representative, will also enjoy greater political authority and legitimacy.
  - India has been calling for the reform of the UN Security Council along with Brazil, Germany and Japan (G-4). The four countries support each others' bids for the permanent seats in the top UN body.
  - Any expansion of permanent members' category must be based on an agreed criteria, rather than be a pre-determined selection.
- **UNSC Veto power:** It is often observed that UN's effectiveness and responsiveness to international security threats depends on judiciously use of the UNSC veto.
  - **Veto Power:** The five permanent members enjoy the luxury of veto power; when a permanent member vetoes a vote, the Council resolution cannot be adopted, regardless of international support. Even if the other fourteen nations vote yes, a single veto will beat this overwhelming show of support.
  - There are **proposals on future of Veto power**:
    - limiting the use of the veto to vital national security issues;
    - requiring agreement from multiple states before exercising the veto;
    - abolishing the veto entirely;
  - Any reform of the veto will be very difficult:
    - **Articles 108 and 109** of the **United Nations Charter** grant the P5 (5 permanent members) veto over any amendments to the Charter, requiring them to approve of any modifications to the UNSC veto power that they themselves hold.

Non-Conventional Challenges

- Since its creation, UN is working with goal of safeguarding peace, protecting human rights, establishing the framework for international justice and promoting economic and social progress. New challenges, such as **climate change, refugees and population ageing are new fields** it has to work.
- **Climate Change:** From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.
- **Growing population:** The world population, which crossed **8 billion on 15 November 2022**, is projected (World Population Prospects 2024) to peak at about **10.3 billion in the mid-2080s** and to decline slightly to about 10.2 billion by 2100.
  - The world population growth rate must slow down significantly **to avoid reaching unsustainable levels**.
- **Population Ageing:** It is poised to become one of the most **significant social transformations** of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

- **Refugees:** The world is witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record.
  - An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world had been forced from home by conflict and persecution at the end of 2016.
  - Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18.
  - There are also 10 million stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.
  - By **mid-2025**, according to UNHCR, **117.3 million** people were forcibly displaced, including about **42.5 million refugees** and 67.8 million internally displaced people, even as humanitarian funding declined.

04 Recent Developments (2024–2026)

Summit of the Future and the Pact for the Future (2024)

- At the **Summit of the Future** (New York, 22–23 September 2024), leaders adopted by consensus the **Pact for the Future** (resolution A/RES/79/1) with two annexes – the **Global Digital Compact** and the **Declaration on Future Generations**.
- The Pact contains **56 actions** in five areas: sustainable development and financing for development; international peace and security; science, technology, innovation and digital cooperation; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance.
- Key commitments include **Security Council reform** (Action 39 – redress the historical injustice against Africa as a priority, enlarge the Council, discuss limits on the veto), reform of the **international financial architecture** (Action 47) and the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Its high-level review is due in 2028.
- Follow-up on digital issues has produced an **Independent International Scientific Panel on AI** and a **Global Dialogue on AI Governance**, whose first session was held in Geneva on 6–7 July 2026.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Summit, stressing that **"Reform is the key to relevance!"**

UN80 Initiative and the Financial Crisis

- In the UN's 80th anniversary year (2025), Secretary-General António Guterres launched the **UN80 Initiative** to build a "simpler, more effective and more coherent" UN system. It is organised in **three workstreams** – efficiencies in the Secretariat, a **Mandate Implementation Review**, and structural changes and programme realignment – with 86 actions in 31 work packages.
- The trigger is a deep **resource crunch**: the UN system's overall resources were projected to shrink by about **US$ 16 billion (nearly 25 per cent) between 2024 and 2026**.
- The General Assembly approved virtually all the Secretary-General's revised 2026 budget proposals in December 2025. The Secretariat is cutting about **21 per cent of staff positions in 2026** and moving about 230 posts (around 2,300 system-wide) to lower-cost duty stations; resolution **80/251** sets new rules on how mandates are created, implemented and reviewed. Possible mergers of UN entities, including **UN Women and UNFPA**, are under assessment.
- The **United States**, the largest contributor, has sharply cut funding and run up large arrears (reported at over US$ 4 billion in September 2026). It began withdrawing from the **WHO** in January 2025, and on **7 January 2026** announced its withdrawal from **66 international organisations, including 31 UN entities** such as the UNFCCC, UN Women, UNFPA, UN-Habitat and UNCTAD.

- Peacekeeping has shrunk too: about 47,000 uniformed personnel were deployed in **11 missions** in early 2026, roughly half the level of the mid-2010s.
- **India's position:** India supports reducing overlap and duplication but argues that "doing more with less" must not weaken the UN's ability to deliver its mandates, and points out that late reimbursements have turned troop contributors into de facto financiers of peacekeeping.

Selection of the Next Secretary-General (2026)

- António Guterres's second term ends on **31 December 2026**. Under **Article 97** of the Charter, the General Assembly appoints the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council, where the veto applies.
- The process formally began with a joint letter of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council on 25 November 2025. Candidates presented their visions publicly, and the Council began secret **"straw polls"** (encourage / discourage / no opinion) on **30 July 2026**.
- Seven candidates remained in the race in late September 2026: **Rebeca Grynspan** (Costa Rica), **Rafael Grossi** (Argentina), **Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana), **María Fernanda Espinosa** and Ivonne Baki (Ecuador), **Macky Sall** (Senegal) and Olara Otunnu (Uganda). Michelle Bachelet (Chile) and Virginia Gamba (Argentina) withdrew.
- In the fourth straw poll (29 September 2026), Grynspan led with 10 "encourage" votes. The new Secretary-General will take office on **1 January 2027**; no woman has yet held the post.

Other Key Developments

- The **81st session of the General Assembly** opened on 8 September 2026 under the presidency of **Khalilur Rahman of Bangladesh**, with the theme "Restoring Trust, Managing Transformation: A United Nations That Delivers for All". The 80th session was presided over by Annalena Baerbock of Germany.
- **Security Council reform:** the Intergovernmental Negotiations held six plenaries in January–June 2026 and received a formal African Model, but text-based negotiations have still not begun.
- **Vetoes** continued to paralyse the Council on major crises – Ukraine (Russia), Gaza and Palestine's membership bid (United States), and the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis and Iran's nuclear programme (China and Russia).

05 Conclusion

- Despite having many short-comings, UN has played a crucial role making this human society more civil, more peaceful & secure in comparison to time of its origin at 2nd World War.
- United Nations, being the world's largest democratic body of all nations, its responsibility towards humanity is very high in terms of building democratic society, economic development of people living in acute poverty, & preserving the Earth's Ecosystem in concern with Climate Change.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

Previous Year Questions

2025

MAINS · GS PAPER II · 15 MARKS

"The reform process in the United Nations remains unresolved, because of the delicate imbalance of East and West and entanglement of the USA vs. Russo-Chinese alliance." Examine and critically evaluate the East-West policy confrontations in this regard.

2025

PRELIMS

Consider the following pairs :
I. International Year of the Woman Farmer : 2026
II. International Year of Sustainable and Resilient Tourism : 2027
III. International Year of Peace and Trust : 2025
IV. International Year of Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence : 2029
How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

a Only one | b Only two | c Only three | **d All the four**

Answer: (d). The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2025 Peace and Trust, 2026 the Woman Farmer, 2027 Sustainable and Resilient Tourism and 2029 Asteroid Awareness and Planetary Defence.

2023

PRELIMS

Consider the following statements :
1. Recently, all the countries of the United Nations have adopted the first-ever compact for international migration, the 'Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)'.
2. The objectives and commitments stated in the GCM are binding on the UN member countries.
3. The GCM addresses internal migration or internally displaced people also in its objectives and commitments.
How many of the above statements are correct?

a Only one | b Only two | c All three | **d None**

Answer: (d). The GCM (2018) was endorsed by most but not all UN members, is legally non-binding and covers only international migration, not internal displacement.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

2020 PRELIMS

Consider the following pairs :
International agreement / set-up — Subject
1. Alma-Ata Declaration — Healthcare of the people
2. Hague Convention — Biological and chemical weapons
3. Talanoa Dialogue — Global climate change
4. Under2 Coalition — Child rights
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?

a 1 and 2 only | b 4 only | c **1 and 3 only** | d 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: (c). Alma-Ata (1978) was on primary health care and the Talanoa Dialogue on climate ambition under the UNFCCC; the Hague Conventions deal with laws of war/private international law and the Under2 Coalition is a subnational climate network.

2019 PRELIMS

Consider the following statements :
1. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) has a 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air'.
2. The UNCAC is the ever-first legally binding global anti-corruption instrument.
3. A highlight of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the inclusion of a specific chapter aimed at returning assets to their rightful owners from whom they had been taken illicitly.
4. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated by its member States to assist in the implementation of both UNCAC and UNTOC.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

a 1 and 3 only | b 2, 3 and 4 only | c **2 and 4 only** | d 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (c). The migrant-smuggling protocol supplements UNTOC, and the asset-recovery chapter is in UNCAC; UNCAC is the first binding global anti-corruption treaty and UNODC services both conventions.

FREE SAMPLE · COMPLETE BOOK AT STORE.LOTUSARISE.COM

2015

PRELIMS

'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', often seen in the news, is

a. a strategy to tackle the regional terrorism, an outcome of a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

b. a plan of action for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific Region, an outcome of the deliberations of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum

c. an agenda for women's empowerment, an outcome of a World Conference convened by the United Nations

d. a strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, a declaration of the East Asia Summit

Answer: (c). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) as an agenda for women's empowerment.

LOTUSARISE IAS

FREE SAMPLE · PART 2

Liked the sample? Get the complete book.

You have read 2 of 43 chapters. The complete Part 2 covers every chapter below, updated to October 2026, with previous year questions from Mains and Prelims (2013–2026) at the end of the chapters where UPSC has asked them.

2	43	89	335
UNITS	CHAPTERS	PYQS 2013–2026	PAGES

IN THE COMPLETE PART 2

Unit IV	Regional and Global Groupings 18 chapters	p. 5
Unit V	International Institutions, Agencies and Fora 25 chapters	p. 131

Part 1 covers India and its Neighbourhood, the Extended Neighbourhood and Bilateral Relations (Units I–III).

COMPLETE BOOK

International Relations Notes for UPSC

The full notes for GS Paper II International Relations, as a PDF.

- Part 1: Units I–III, 56 chapters
- Part 2: Units IV–V, 43 chapters
- Updated to October 2026, with PYQs 2013–2026

SCAN TO OPEN

₹236

Get the full book →

One-time payment · PDF download