

# 1. The growing UN edifice

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This chapter establishes the UN's pedigree and charts its evolution over 75 years. To an extent which has been confirmed in recent research, the UN was built on foundations which had been laid down by the League of Nations created in 1919. In some important ways, the UN was the fulfilment of US President Woodrow Wilson's vision for a world organization, of which the League was a partial realization. Other key individuals associated with the League carried its aspirations forward to San Francisco and were present at the formal birth of the UN in 1945.

The Charter declaimed the values and principles of the UN and sketched an outline of its architecture. Organizationally, however, the complex system which evolved would not have been recognizable to the founders. Growth was a manifestation of UN vibrancy. The system drew in the original specialized agencies and expanded from within in response mainly to the acknowledgement of new development needs. But the process of steady accretion was not governed by any structural blueprint, and the dispersion of the system has been a source of both strength and weakness which this book sets out in detail. Today, the UN system comprises four main pillars of activity, elaborately developed but poorly meshed.

## FROM THE LEAGUE TO THE UN

In April 1946 Lord Robert Cecil, an architect of the League of Nations, closed its final session in Geneva with the words "The League is dead; long live the United Nations" (Walters 1955, 815). He reflected neither rancour nor triumph. A new international organization had already been born which was able to draw on the lessons of a quarter century of experience. Those lessons, both positive and negative, are still the subject of debate.

Almost from the outset, the League was hobbled by the absence of the world's ascendant power. In 1918, President Wilson had called in the US Congress for "a general association of states . . . for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike" (Wilson 1918). His vision and commitment through his long stay in Europe in 1919 were critical to persuading the

European powers of the wisdom of creating the League of Nations at Versailles. But while the League was in large part an American inspiration, and despite the exhaustive urging of the president, the Republican-controlled Congress kept the US out of membership. It was only the first of many subsequent examples of US partisan politics impacting heavily on international cooperation. The absence of the US ultimately doomed the League to failure as a political and diplomatic force. Particularly after the economic devastation in Europe wrought by World War I, the United States was the only country that could have helped enforce the political settlements the League attempted to contrive.

Although at its peak the membership of the League numbered 58 states, it was not stable. Apart from the US, the Soviet Union was not initially a member of the League. It was a member for just five years before being expelled in 1939 when it invaded Finland. Germany joined in 1926, but Hitler marched out in 1933, the same year as the departure of Japan, which had invaded Manchuria. Italy was also expelled after its invasion of Ethiopia in the 1930s. The active engagement of the UK and France gave the League a strong European orientation, like most previous international arrangements. Yet, although the League scored some minor successes in resolving some minor international boundary disputes, these two powers had neither the resources nor the will to curtail unilateral aggression by others. The outbreak of war in 1939 irreparably tarred the League's reputation, after which it went into partial hibernation.

Military and diplomatic impuissance, however, has obfuscated some of the League's achievements in international cooperation, from which the UN has drawn. Although the US was not a League member, the interest of its statesmen and academics continued, and the US became a participant in its Economic and Financial Committees (Clavin 2013). The involvement of US experts in the Economic and Financial Organization (EFO) of the League, which migrated from Geneva to Princeton University during World War II, was an important manifestation of US commitment to research within the League and to the fashioning of a new international organization. The fortunes of private US industrialists also played a part. The Rockefeller Foundation funded a substantial part of the League's health programmes and contributed to its economic activities. There was also financial support from the Carnegie Endowment, the Twentieth Century Fund and the World Peace Foundation (Murphy 2006).

The League's structure anticipated that of the UN. There was a Supreme Economic Council comprising initially four permanent and six non-permanent members, the latter elected by the Assembly of the full membership. The Council and Assembly were supported by a permanent secretariat, staffed by what has been described as the world's

first international civil service (Clavin 2013, 14). The EFO was the most important policy body, and helped inspire the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Other more specialized organizations established under the auspices of the League laid the foundations for some of the UN agencies. Soon after its founding, the League of Nations became preoccupied with people displaced by conflict, and established a High Commission for Refugees in 1920 under the famed Norwegian humanitarian, Fridtjof Nansen. Initially concerned with Russian refugees, following the Bolshevik revolution, the High Commission expanded its geographic scope within Europe. It also became concerned with refugee rights – issuing 'Nansen passports' – and helped with education and jobs. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was the successor to Nansen's office. Its work was taken over by the UN's Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) towards the end of WWII and led to the establishment of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950.

The League of Nations Health Office (LNHO) attracted scientists concerned with hunger, nutrition and hygiene. One of them, John Boyd Orr, was subsequently to become the first Director-General of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945, which in turn absorbed some of the resources of the League's International Institute of Agriculture in Rome. The LNHO was one of the foundations of the UN's World Health Organization (WHO). A measure of continuity was also ensured because many League staff were able to find jobs in the new UN agencies.

Another important agency which predated the UN but which commanded considerable international interest and commitment, including in the US, was the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO was a neighbour of the League in Geneva and of similar size, and another creation of the 1919 Versailles Conference. The EFO and the ILO were both focussed on social issues. They enjoyed a measure of collaboration but also sibling rivalry – a harbinger of future inter-agency squabbles within the UN.

## MADE IN THE USA

The League's political failings led to its demise. However, it was another US president who led the drive for a new security organization in the aftermath of World War II. Like Wilson, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had managed to commit the country to fight on the side of the Allies. But he had also secured bipartisan support in Congress for the ensuing peace, and backed the founding of an organization "to save succeeding

generations from the scourge of war” and promote rights, justice and social progress (UN Charter, Preamble).<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to the Atlantic Charter in 1941 which committed them to the post-war creation of a system of global security. By the end of that year, Roosevelt had coined the term ‘United Nations’, and early the following year, 26 countries joined the USA and Britain in the alliance.

Compared with preparations for the League, the Americans were well ahead of the British and the other Allies in envisioning the future. Churchill himself was preoccupied with the war effort, and the Foreign Office only began to give serious attention to the “World Organization scheme” in 1944 (Mazower 2012, 198). As a US State Department observer stated in his diary in 1941, “the United States alone was doing some thinking on what was to become of the world after the war. The Allies were so busy winning the war that they were not even risking possible divergence of views among themselves over peace terms” (quoted in Rofe 2015, 26). War was thus a propitious context for unifying views on the future among the Allies while active preparations for a new organization got under way in the US State Department in 1941. The prime mover was Russian-born Leo Pasvolksy, an aide to Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State. Pasvolksy established a Division of Special Research on the new UN and was later to become the principal author of the Charter.

Like the League (and before it the Concert of Europe), security was to be centred on the victorious powers that occupied the permanent seats of the SC, the P5. From the League’s Council, the UN was to carry over the power of veto of the permanent members which was essential to persuading the Soviet Union to join. The veto could not prevent the discussion of issues requested by a majority of the SC, but could be applied to the use of force or imposition of sanctions (Mazower 2012). It was seen as an essential feature of the UN’s political mission if the SC was to avoid defections, as had occurred in the League. However, it has proved to be an expensive concession: a major hindrance to peacemaking where P5 interests were at stake, and an immovable impediment to SC reform.

Away from politics and security, ideas for the future work of the UN in the economic and social fields were emerging from Princeton University. The League’s EFO, rehoused in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, was headed by Alexander Loveday, who remained active in encouraging support for future mechanisms of cooperation. He was

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<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt had served in World War I, attended the Versailles conference in 1919 and of course was all too aware of the need to convince the American polity in matters of international cooperation.

supported by the thinking of David Mitrany, a political theorist who had worked for the League and whose main distinction was his proposal for a 'functionalist' approach to international relations (Mitrany 1966). It was his contention that international cooperation should be based on issues that unite people, keeping the technical separate from the political. Solutions to international problems should be sought by function, not form. Mitrany claimed to be inspired by President Roosevelt's New Deal, which he imagined in internationalized guise (Browne 2017).

While the League had been deemed a failure on political and diplomatic counts, it had been able to demonstrate the value of practical technical cooperation, the basis of the future operational role of the UN. Provision had been made under the League's Covenant for multilateral technical assistance (TA) (Nashat 1978). An early example was a request from China for advisory assistance on health and hygiene. The political situation in the region at that time was delicate, with the Sino-Japanese conflict breaking out in 1931. There were also Chinese concerns over sovereignty, and it took time to find acceptable conditions to meet the request. Experts (from the United States) were sent on the strict understanding that their role was to advise rather than decide. In 1933, the first resident technical adviser was installed – a forerunner of the UN country representatives. By 1941, some 30 advisers had been fielded, all paid for by the Chinese government (Rist 1997; Browne and Laird 2011). It was not until 1979 that (post-revolutionary) China was again to invite a UN presence to facilitate more TA from the UN.

The groundwork for the institutions of the new UN continued with a series of landmark conferences convened at the urging of Roosevelt, who wanted them to be in the USA. Roosevelt had articulated the aspirations of a world of peace in his 'four freedoms' speech on the State of the Union to Congress on 6 January 1941: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. It was appropriate that the first conference should be devoted to the freedom from want (from hunger). In choosing a humanitarian rather than a political focus, there was also a better chance of convincing the American public of the necessity of the UN, and a success would presage more areas of functional cooperation.<sup>2</sup> The successful UN Food Conference was held in Hot Springs, Virginia in May/June 1943. There it was agreed to establish the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), which was to formally open its doors in 1945. Significantly, the League was not invited to the conference since the organizers wished to emphasize the importance of building anew.

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<sup>2</sup> There were nevertheless some British detractors who considered that post-war relief was more urgent than a technical conference on agriculture (Clavin 2013).

However, as we saw above, a leading specialist in the League, John Boyd Orr, was to become the first Director-General of the FAO.

Later in 1943, the mounting concerns about wartime relief were met through the creation of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The short history of UNRRA, which was wound up after only four years, contains pointers to the emerging profile of international organizations and the future of humanitarian intervention by the UN. The scale of its operations was unprecedented. It employed 12 000 international civil servants, coordinating the work of 125 international private non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It assisted millions of displaced persons (11 million in Germany alone) in 23 different war-torn states of Europe and Asia. Its total spending was today's equivalent of \$22 billion – more than contemporary levels of UN humanitarian aid – subscribed by the principal member-states contributing 1 per cent of their national incomes (Karetny and Weiss 2015; Woodbridge 1950).

UNRRA acted as another bridge between the increasingly marginalized League and the emerging UN. Led by Loveday, the League's staff in Princeton advised UNRRA's first director, Herbert Lehman, on the challenges involved in setting up a new international organization, including the recruitment of staff and fund-raising. The new organization bought into the League's philosophy of linking relief with rehabilitation, but eschewed advice on broadening membership of UNRRA's Council beyond the 'big four'. It was an early example of the power of money which has inevitably dominated the governance of UN organizations ever since, setting up a constant challenge to counteract a sense of mistrust among smaller countries.

While short-lived, UNRRA was nevertheless a success, due in no small measure to the involvement of a dynamic young Australian, Robert Jackson, appointed as deputy to Lehman in charge of operations the day of Germany's surrender in 1945. Jackson came with an almost mythical reputation. He had previously run the Middle East Supply Centre (MESOC) in Cairo, a highly complex logistical operation supporting Allied forces in that region. He was also known as "the man who saved Malta" (Gibson 2006, 17), in recognition of his success in helping prepare the island for attack by the Axis powers. Jackson found UNRRA to be languishing with insufficient funds and many staff with inappropriate skills. He immediately set about transforming the organization, recognizing that UNRRA was not only fulfilling a critical role of restoring livelihoods, but also seeking to provide a model of international cooperation and an exemplar of multilateralism. He broadly succeeded on both counts.

UNRRA's success, however, also tested the limits of American multilateralism. By 1945, with conflict at an end, the configurations of Cold

War geopolitics were already emerging, even while continuing assistance to Europe was still needed. The new US president, Harry S. Truman, was virulently anti-communist and mistrustful of assistance channelled through the UN for the benefit of countries in the Soviet sphere. At the urging of the State Department, it soon became clear that support for any subsequent phase of assistance for the recovery funded by the USA would have to give the main benefactor a more dominant role. It was in this spirit that the European Recovery Program (better known as the Marshall Plan) was conceived in 1947 while UNRRA was being wound up.

The cooling of East–West relations during Europe’s recovery led to the first major costly diversion in UN organizational construction, at a time when President Truman was outlining his new anti-communist doctrine. In 1946, UN member-states led by Poland had proposed the establishment of a new body dedicated to the reconstruction of Europe, going beyond the more limited humanitarian mandate of UNRRA. During the ensuing discussions in the UN, there was support for the objectives of such an organization, but some concern about the creation of a regional entity. After nearly a year of arduous debate, however, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) came into being in March 1947, headed by the celebrated Swedish economist (and future Nobel laureate), Gunnar Myrdal. The ECE’s primary mandate was to promote cooperation across Europe and develop a framework for the recovery. In June, Secretary of State George Marshall announced his plan for European recovery, but without mentioning the ECE, the organization specifically created to manage the reconstruction (Berthelot and Rayment 2004). Marshall invited the European countries, led by the UK and France, to work out their own arrangements for administering the plan, which was destined to be substantial in its financial size. A conference was held in Paris in July 1947 to decide on a response to the Americans, and the Europeans chose to create a new organization which came into being in Paris the following year: the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).<sup>3</sup> The ECE, specifically designed to manage Europe’s recovery, had been sidelined. The USA had been prepared to entertain a proposal to channel the Marshall Plan through the ECE, but the UK had misgivings about the involvement of the Soviet Union in the programme. In fact, these fears were misplaced since, although invited to the Paris conference, the Soviet

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<sup>3</sup> The OEEC became the Organisation for Economic Co-operation for Development (OECD) in 1961, a research and advisory body comprising members of all the advanced non-communist economies. Today its membership numbers 35, including some former developing countries such as Mexico and South Korea, as well as some Eastern European countries which are members of the European Union.

Union did not attend, also pressuring other Eastern European countries to decline the invitation (Kostelecky 1989).

This was an unfortunate outcome for the UN since it now had a new body summarily stripped of its main rationale, also raising questions then, and even up to the present day, about the wisdom of regional structures. The ECE was “the path not taken”, and it “never became a forum where ministers of finance from the whole of Europe would meet regularly to address the broader economic problems facing the region” (Berthelot and Rayment 2004, 62). A similar episode of marginalization was repeated after 1989 at the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the transition to market economies of the former Soviet republics. The ECE was bypassed again in favour of the European Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other regional institutions. Notwithstanding the early setback for the ECE, however, the UN went on to create economic commissions in its four other major regions. They have acted as research centres on common regional issues, but none was ever deployed as a recipient of regional development assistance, seeing other regional and subregional bodies established by member-states in parallel but outside the UN. With the possible exception of the regional Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), which has acted as a think-tank for that region, the UN’s other commissions have struggled to find valid roles which did not conflict with other UN entities (Browne and Weiss 2013).<sup>4</sup>

In fact, while the UN may have aspired to become a key economic and financial forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC and the regional commissions it has never successfully taken on that role. In this respect, the models emanating from the EFO in Princeton were never realized. The League did help promote international cooperation in the financial and economic fields, but they resulted in new organizations not co-located with the UN and only loosely affiliated with it.

The ground for these new institutions was laid at another major international meeting: the UN Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in July 1944. The major players who bestrode the conference proceedings were Harry Dexter White of the USA and John Maynard Keynes of the UK, both Treasury officials in their respective governments. The conference was White’s idea (Keynes was initially reluctant). His first priority was to seek to prevent the currency disorders of the inter-war years, for which he conceived an international lending bank of last resort to bail out countries in balance of payments deficit in order

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<sup>4</sup> ECLA was initially opposed by the United States, which was promoting its own programme of assistance to Latin America.

to maintain currency equilibrium. White's proposals would have been guided in part by the EFO's Ragnar Nurkse, who published an influential treatise on the *International Currency Experience* (Nurkse 1944) and whose proposals for a pegged exchange-rate system was the basis for the way that the new institution – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – was to operate, at least initially.

Currency stabilization was the primary goal of the conference. A secondary objective was the creation of a bank for post-war reconstruction whose design became the primary responsibility of Keynes (Mallaby 2004), famously the proponent of increased government spending and low interest rates to spur demand and counter economic depression (Keynes 1936) – a course of action which had been largely ignored in the 1930s and which the western governments were determined not to repeat. What emerged was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, later the World Bank), intended to provide capital for the European economies but envisaging the possibility of supporting 'development' in other regions, a concept still in its infancy. The Soviet Union was one of more than 40 countries to send delegates to the conference. But although they debated over and then signed the final agreement, they never participated in either organization.

The two Bretton Woods institutions became the foundations of the international market economy. Although begotten of a UN conference and designated as UN specialized agencies, the IBRD and IMF were always peripheral members of the UN family of development organizations, for various reasons which could not have been avoided. They operated according to strict banking principles as an essential basis of their credit standings, permitting them to borrow and on-lend funding on favourable terms. As experience was to show, these commercial strictures raised economic ends above, and sometimes to the exclusion of, social objectives. They were Washington neighbours with close physical and operational proximity to the US Treasury; and, again in contrast to the UN, the membership voting system that guided policy was heavily weighted in favour of the major western powers. With time, the World Bank gradually recast its mandate so that its operations began to encroach on traditional UN development domains. This bifurcation of the multilateral constellation of organizations under the UN banner was to lead to considerable friction between the Bretton Woods institutions and what was to become the UN development system.

There was to be a third 'Bretton Woods' institution of global economic governance, for international trade. The Great Depression in 1929–32 had been precipitated in large part through competitive protectionism, led by Germany and the United States – the latter passing the Smoot-Hawley

Tariff Act in 1930, which raised average import tariffs from 38 to 52 per cent. Largely as a result, the volume of world trade declined by 40 per cent during the period of the Depression (Rittberger and Zangl 2004). In a move to promote freer trade, Congress in 1945 authorized President Truman to negotiate mutual tariff reductions with its major trade partners. Two years later, Congress ratified the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which came into effect in 1948 in Geneva among 23 mainly industrialized countries. It was the first of what were to be nine rounds of tariff negotiation.

The UN, again led by the United States, was travelling along another track in order to free up trade on a broader scale. ECOSOC approved a resolution in 1946 to create an International Trade Organization (ITO). The charter for the future ITO was agreed in Havana in 1948 and required ratification by the United States to come into effect. Truman submitted it to Congress several times without success and then withdrew it in 1950, seeing that it was not going to be approved (Palmer and Mavroidis 2004; Browne 2017). The ITO was thus still-born, prompting the UN to seek other ways of negotiating trade deals, as will be outlined below. The 'modern' ITO – the World Trade Organization – would have to wait another 50 years before appearing.

In the meantime, immediately following the Bretton Woods conference, a new meeting had been proposed to draw up a blueprint for the United Nations for final agreement in San Francisco in 1945. This landmark meeting was held at the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Washington DC and attended by just four delegations: the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union and China. (Since the Soviet Union was not willing to meet directly with China, the meeting was held in two phases: first without China, and then with China but without the Soviet Union). One of the chroniclers of the League maintained that the lessons of history had taught that "economic, financial, social and security concerns had to be woven together as much as possible" (Clavin 2013, 326), a position enunciated in 1939 by the League's Bruce Report, drafted by a commission headed by the former Australian prime minister (League of Nations 1939) and echoed by Cordell Hull at the beginning the meeting. Given the timing of the report, published just before the outbreak of war, the Bruce Report was still-born as a blueprint for a refashioned League, or even the future UN. However, it contained some important ideas, including the creation of a Central Committee for Economic and Social Questions which was a model for the UN's future ECOSOC. Initially, however, the Soviet delegation played down the economic and social dimensions in favour of an organization dedicated to peace and security. The US and UK were able to convince the Soviet Union to remove its opposition after a compromise

was reached on the use of the veto in the future SC (Burley and Browne 2015).

Yet a comprehensive master plan for an integrated UN based on those lessons of history was bound to elude the Dumbarton Oaks delegates, since the organizational evolution was moving in different directions. Bretton Woods had effectively hived off parts of the financial (and later the economic) agenda under organizational constitutions that differed from the universal and egalitarian principles of the future UN. And since their creation, the two Bretton Woods agencies have studiously maintained their operational independence from the UN.<sup>5</sup> For the peace and security agenda, the new SC was to vest unique powers in the five victorious allies (including France). This left other economic and social issues to the responsibility of the Economic and Social Council. But some organizations which were to fall under the ECOSOC banner had already been created with their own separate constitutions. Foremost among these was the ILO, already 25 years old, which reaffirmed its independence at its own conference in Philadelphia in 1944. The conference which created the FAO had been held the year before. The outcome of Dumbarton Oaks was to acknowledge the existence of these bodies and ensure that they were only, in the words of the Charter (Article 63), “brought into relationship” with the UN and its specialized agencies.

Was Mitrany’s functionalism therefore wrong for the UN? Yes and no. The idea of creating epistemic communities in a certain number of technical fields was sound, and within the UN development system (UNDS) has helped enrich our understanding of technical problems by attracting some of the best specialists in the respective fields. However, the relative autonomy of the specialized agencies within the big tent of ECOSOC and in the absence of a strong centre has encouraged a dispersion of interests. Exponents of functionalism had little to say about avoiding overlap between communities, or on managing key issues (such as gender equality, water access or environmental management) which cut across different disciplines. The UNDS is still living with these ambiguities. Indeed, in the development sphere it has left an imprint on the UN’s most recent development goals.

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<sup>5</sup> “[The] tension between the formal UN status and the de facto operational independence of the IMF and World Bank has been a consistent feature of the international scene” (Toye and Toye 2004, 23).

## MORE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

During the 1940s and 1950s seven more specialized agencies – besides the ILO and the FAO – were brought into relation with the UN. Three standard and norm-setting agencies in transport and communications joined the family in 1947–48. The oldest of all the UN agencies is the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva, with antecedents dating back to 1865 when it was created as the International Telegraph Union to standardize telegraphy equipment and establish common international tariffs. It has remained the custodian of international norms and standards in all modern communications. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is also Swiss-based (in Bern) and has a similarly long pedigree, having been created in 1874 to facilitate seamless international postal services. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal was established following agreement on the 1944 Chicago convention on international civil aviation. The ICAO continues to set the standards and procedures for safe air travel.

Weather scientists came together to form the International Meteorological Organization in 1879 to facilitate the exchange of information across national borders. It was succeeded in 1950 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) which became part of the UN system, based in Geneva. The WMO sets technical standards to promote international cooperation on the conditions of the Earth's atmosphere, the weather and climate it produces, and the resulting global distribution of water resources.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was agreed upon at a Conference of the Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) towards the end of 1945, opening its doors the following year. The Geneva-based Bureau of International Education already provided a model for the new organization, but the French government wanted the League's International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC), based in Paris, to be also taken into consideration. The IIIC involved international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) directly, but under pressure from the US and UK, the organization became formally intergovernmental from the outset. INGOs were given consultative status, and each member-state was encouraged to create national commissions intended to reflect the views of civil society and influence official delegations. Also from the IIIC came the idea for cultural and scientific exchange. The 'S' in UNESCO was understood to include both the natural and human sciences. Julian Huxley, its first director, wanted science at UNESCO to cover a wide range of knowledge and learning (Singh 2011, 14). The French did not get their INGO forum, but prevailed in widening the scope of UNESCO and having it located in Paris.

As we saw above, the World Health Organization in Geneva was partially founded on the League of Nations Health Office (LNHO) created in 1920. Two other major international health organizations preceded the LNHO, however: the Office International d'Hygiène Publique in Paris and the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) in Washington. When the World Health Organization was founded in 1948, it was intended as an amalgam of all three pre-existing agencies driven by the logic of global cooperation in disease control and prevention. While it put a formal end to inter-agency rivalry, however, the PASB sought to maintain some of its independence by becoming the regional arm of WHO. History left its mark, since WHO has always maintained a strong regional structure, setting up tensions with the agency's centralized leadership and need for cohesion (Lee 2009).

The ninth specialized agency was the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), created in 1957. It was inspired by US President Dwight Eisenhower, who saw atoms for peace as a means of uniting the world. The IAEA promotes the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, as well as husbanding information on all nuclear and radioactive material around the world. Although conceived ten years earlier, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was established in London in 1958 to establish and oversee maritime safety standards. By the end of the 1950s, the UN system thus included the following ten specialized agencies: FAO, IAEA, ICAO, ITU, ILO, IMO, UNESCO, UPU, WHO and WMO (not including the IBRD and IMF). All reported to ECOSOC. But, as a reflection of their independent origins, few of them actually included the UN in their names.<sup>6</sup> From 1950 onwards, the availability of centralized funding for operational purposes through the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA), the UN's main aid-funding mechanism, was an important factor in helping to knit the emerging development system more closely together. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, central funding through EPTA and its successors also resulted in tensions between the priorities of the specialized agencies and those of individual developing countries.

Today, with four added after the 1950s, there are 14 UN specialized agencies, excluding the two Bretton Woods institutions. Below, we trace the genesis of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO),

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<sup>6</sup> Brian Urquhart, former UN Under-Secretary-General, records this anecdote in the oral history of the UN Intellectual History Project: "The director general of the World Health Organization suddenly devised a new flag for the World Health Organization, which made no mention of the UN. Hammarskjöld [then Secretary-General] wrote to this guy and said, 'Look, you are a United Nations agency.' And he got a furious reply back saying, 'it has nothing to do with you, stay out of it.'" (Transcript of interview on 6 January 2000, <http://www.unhistory.org>).

which grew up within the secretariat and chose to become a specialized agency in 1985 in Vienna. Previously the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), first established in 1967 as a patent registration organization, became a self-funded specialized agency in 1970 in Geneva, which hosts the largest agglomeration of UN bodies. In 1977, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was founded with initial funding mainly from Arab states which had benefited from large increases in oil revenues. It is located in Rome, along with the FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP). Finally, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Madrid asked to join the UN system and was admitted in 2003.

## SAN FRANCISCO AND THE CHARTER

President Roosevelt wanted the UN's founding conference to be held before the end of hostilities in the European theatre, seeking to capitalize on the unity of purpose among the Allies. He was also aware, perhaps, of his own frailty. After Dumbarton Oaks, the US State Department aggressively promoted the need for an international organization to keep the peace among the American public (Mazower 2012, 209) and to resist the sentiment of isolationism. A greater challenge was keeping the smaller countries onside, since they feared the emergence of a global directorate of the great powers, especially following agreement in Yalta (February 1945) on their veto powers. Tragically, the UN lost its main architect just before the United Nations Conference on International Organization opened in San Francisco in April. But it was important that the meeting was not delayed since, within a further year, East–West geopolitical rivalry could have broken apart the great power consensus. As it was, the wartime coalition, including China and France, was kept intact and has remained so, thus helping to ensure and safeguard the universality of membership which had eluded the League of Nations.

The main task of the two-month conference, attended by 50 countries, was to agree on the text of the UN Charter and the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).<sup>7</sup> All the founding members signed the Charter on 24 June 1945, and it came into force four months later on 24 October – now UN Day – when all had ratified it. The Charter

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<sup>7</sup> The number of countries included the Ukrainian and Belarussian states of the USSR as a concession to Stalin, who had feared the numerical dominance of western states in the new body. Poland was also invited, but it had no government at the time. However, it became the 51st country to ratify the UN Charter in October 1945.

describes the main organs of the UN: GA (all member-states); SC of five permanent members and six (later ten) rotating members; Economic and Social Council (18 member-states, later 54); Trusteeship Council (member-states administering trust territories); International Court of Justice (15 members); and Secretariat. For an organization aspiring to be the global “parliament of man” (Kennedy 2006), the Charter is a surprisingly succinct document, containing just 111 articles. However, while it has been subject to (minor) amendment and subsequent interpretation, it has acted as an effective initial blueprint for the new organization in the various guises and functions which are critically reviewed in subsequent chapters.

The role and functioning of the GA is described in Chapter IV of the Charter. The Assembly is open to all members, with most decisions approved through a simple majority. However there is a category of ‘important questions’ requiring two-thirds majorities, including recommendations regarding international peace and security, election of the non-permanent members of the SC and the members of ECOSOC, the admission of new members, and the suspension or expulsion of member-states. In contrast to the League, there have never been any expulsions from the UN.<sup>8</sup> Indonesia withdrew in 1965, over a dispute with Malaysia, but rejoined 20 months later. Maintaining the full membership has been a hallmark of the UN, but also a source of criticism, since member-states have often abrogated its rules and decisions. However, universality has facilitated exchange and dialogue even between opposing powers, and avoided the difficulties of trying to define the precise conditions under which states might be excluded.

A key function of the GA is the approval of the biennial budget of the organization. However, other resolutions of the GA are not binding, which distinguishes it from the SC. Also unlike the SC, which can be called into action at any time, the GA meets in annual sessions of limited duration. Thus its role in peace and security matters is strictly limited in practice, while economic and social issues are mainly delegated to ECOSOC.

As the Charter makes clear, the SC (Chapter V) is intended to be the UN’s most powerful body, since a condition for membership is that states will “agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council”. The condition has too often been observed in the breach, but the decisions carry weight and are irrevocable except by a countermanding decision. The veto of the five permanent members (P5) cannot hinder procedural matters

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<sup>8</sup> In 1971, the Republic of China (Taiwan) was replaced as a member by the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

or prevent the discussion of an issue, requiring an affirmative vote of nine out of 15. But, crucially, a single P5 veto can prevent a decision.

The SC's scope of action is defined by Chapter VI on dispute settlement and Chapter VII on responses to aggression and threats to peace. Disputes may be settled by means of procedures determined by the Council, or *in extremis* referred to the International Court of Justice. Chapter VII defines how the UN can try to contain and respond to conflict. The Charter outlines military options, which include the establishment of a Military Staff Committee comprising members drawn from the P5, intended to advise the Council, and the use of military bases put at the disposal of the UN by member-states to enforce peace. Article 51, however, provides for the option of self-defence by any state without recourse to the SC, and was almost certainly included to assuage the concerns of the P5 (and especially the US and the Soviet Union) that the UN could not prevent such action (Kennedy 2006). To enforce the decisions of the Council, Chapter VII provides for the UN to impose sanctions: "measures not involving the use of armed force . . . to be employed to give effect to its decisions" (Article 41) or "action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain to restore international peace and security" (Article 42). The Military Staff Committee exists more in name than reality, and the military bases never materialized. However, these articles anticipate the UN's subsequent operations under the rubric of 'peacekeeping' even though the word does not appear in the Charter.

The balance between the global responsibilities of the UN and the subsidiary roles of regional organizations is outlined in Chapter VIII. The inclusion was prescient and has come to be important in the context of peacekeeping operations. Countries closest to a crisis have the greatest interest in its resolution, and in Africa the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have mobilized armed forces to encourage the resolution of conflicts on that continent, with the authority of the SC and sometimes preceding UN peace operations. "Regional" has also come to include broader alliances such as NATO, which have also been brought in to support peace enforcement and maintenance.

Chapters IX and X are concerned with economic and social cooperation and the functioning of ECOSOC. Chapter IX contains a rudimentary outline of the UN's future development agenda, but importantly it includes a mention of human rights. While this agenda has been substantially refined in subsequent years, Article 55 remains a key reference for the task of the UN in the development domain. In Chapter X, there is little detail on how ECOSOC is expected to exercise its coordinating function, especially with respect to the specialized agencies, which are only to be "brought into

relationship with the United Nations". This is a weak formulation which has not served the UN well in practice. The Preparatory Commission to the UN, reporting in 1945, helped give some meaning to the relationship between ECOSOC and the specialized agencies:

the task of co-ordinating the policies and activities of specialized agencies . . . can be performed only if the Members individually will assist in making co-ordination possible. The acceptance of each Member of this responsibility for harmonizing its policies and activities in the different fields covered by the specialized agencies and the United Nations will prevent confusion and conflict and enable the United Nations to achieve the purposes of the Charter. (UN 1945)

But Article 63 only asserts that ECOSOC "may coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultations with and recommendations to such agencies", which is much vaguer. Member-states have never fully harmonized their own national positions with respect to the UN's development organizations, and the weak coordinating role of ECOSOC has not avoided the "confusion and conflict" anticipated by the Preparatory Commission. Thus, the specialized agencies were at the outset operationally independent of the UN, and of the organizations which the UN went on to create as part of its expanded secretariat.

Chapters XI, XII and XIII set out the arrangements for "non-self-governing territories", including the creation of the Trusteeship Council. These chapters were included to take account of the ten "mandated" trust territories inherited from the League, as well as Italian Somaliland. Trusteeship was of special interest to the main trustees and colonial powers – the US, UK and France – concerned about the pace of independence of these territories. The language of these chapters is therefore rather cautious. The Trusteeship Council operated for some 50 years, ceasing activities in 1994 when Palau – formerly part of the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands – acceded to independence and became a UN member.

The International Court of Justice – described briefly in Chapter XIV of the Charter, to which its more detailed statutes are appended – became the judicial organ of the UN, assuming the functions of the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, which was wound up with the League in 1946.

In Chapter XV on the secretariat, there are only five short articles describing the role and functions of the Secretary-General (SG), and they effectively confer on the incumbent two contrasting roles. Explicitly, the SG is designated as the "chief administrative officer" of the UN (Article 97) but, secondly, is empowered to "bring to the attention of the SC any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international

peace and security” (Article 99). The roles of the SG are thus both administrative, as head of the UN secretariat, and implicitly political. This “curious duality” has in practice allowed each of the holders of the office to demonstrate whether to be more secretary or general (Tharoor 2007, 33). Gordenker (2005) calls the incumbent the “world constable”. Whatever the appellation, the Charter created a position of potentially unprecedented authority in the international public domain, but one of ambiguity and delicacy also. Since the appointment is subject to the unanimous approval of the SC, the SG must in effect be the least unacceptable candidate for the P5, yet maintain neutrality and independence from them. For obvious reasons, the nine men who have served as SGs have come from outside the major powers.

Overall the Charter reflects the tension and ambiguity inherent in the new organization (Mazower 2012) at the time of its creation. But it has left scope for interpretation and, while it provides timeless guidance on many of the fundamental principles of the United Nations, it has not inhibited substantial change and adaptation over the years.

## ORGANIC GROWTH FROM WITHIN

Following San Francisco, an early task of the new secretariat was to find a permanent home. The US was determined that it should be located in the country, and various sites vied to be host. In 1948, the issue was settled with the purchase of land at Turtle Bay in Manhattan, New York City, with funds provided by the Rockefeller family. The UN moved to its new home in 1952. The Palais des Nations in Geneva, only completed in 1939 for the use of the League, became the European headquarters of the UN.<sup>9</sup>

In parallel with the co-option of a growing number of specialized agencies under the UN banner, the organic growth of the UN secretariat itself began. The earliest creation, UNRRA, providing assistance for post-war recovery, had its own sunset clause; and its prompt closure in 1947 was ensured by US insistence on having a greater role in European rehabilitation, paving the way for the Marshall Plan. When the organization was wound up, however, many of the staff were appointed to key administrative posts in the UN and the specialized agencies. Within the new organization, these UNRRA veterans agreed on common personnel arrangements,

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<sup>9</sup> The original plan for the UN headquarters in New York including a building on the same site intended to house the specialized agencies, thus avoiding the wide geographical dispersion of the agencies which has hindered closer cooperation (Brian Urquhart, Transcript of interview on 6 January 2000, UN Intellectual History Project).

including salary scales and pensions, a ‘common system’ which has served the UN very well ever since (Symonds 1979). Some of the resources of UNRRA were channelled to the new UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), which came into being in 1947, as well as to the FAO, UNESCO and WHO (Murphy 2006). The word “emergency” in UNICEF’s title reflected its temporary role in providing post-war relief to children in Europe and Japan. In 1950, the organization was slated for closure since the original emergency for which it had been created was deemed to be over. However, several developing countries drew attention to the serious plight of millions of their own children, and UNICEF was given a new lease of life as a global humanitarian and development agency, which it has remained (as the UN Children’s Fund) (Jolly 2014).

More humanitarian agencies were to follow. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was created in 1949 in order to care for the many Palestinians made homeless by the Arab–Israeli conflict the previous year. At the time, it was not thought that it would be required for the next seven decades helping to feed, house and educate a steadily growing number of people and their offspring displaced from their homeland by the expansion of Israel.

Resettlement in Europe continued to be a preoccupation. UNRRA had left a legacy of needs and, following its closure, the US helped create (and substantially fund) the International Refugee Organization (IRO). It soon became evident, however, that the problem was not confined to one continent. For example, the partition of India and the birth of Pakistan in 1947 led to one of the largest displacements of people in history, causing widespread distress. There were also changing perceptions of a refugee. Hitherto, international organizations had been established to assist groups of displaced people temporarily until returning to their homes or being resettled. This was the post-conflict pattern. Increasingly, however, the human rights of individuals rather than the collective needs of groups were considered important by the UN. Individuals needed protection not just from displacement but also from fear of persecution, a sentiment enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 (Loescher et al. 2008). The wider geographical and human rights scope of refugee protection led to discussions for the need for a new global UN organization, and in 1950 the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was established. At the insistence of the US, the new organization was to receive central administrative support from the UN budget alone, while its operations would be financed by individual donors, who were slow to come forward. With funding scarce, there were also strict limitations on the mandate of UNHCR which was not to provide material assistance to refugees or indulge in any political activities. It was initially

created for just two years, but the ongoing (and growing) need to protect refugees ensured UNHCR's continuation.

The other major humanitarian organization to be created by the UN was the World Food Programme some years later in 1963, another American initiative. Hunger in the world had been a preoccupation from the time of the League, and was one reason for the creation of FAO following the very first UN conference. By the 1950s it was becoming apparent that hunger in the developing world coexisted with growing surpluses of food in certain developed countries, and in particular the US, which managed a major bilateral food aid programme. There were proposals for the FAO to help in channelling some of these food surpluses to needy countries. At a meeting convened by the FAO in 1961 to review these proposals, the head of the US delegation – George McGovern, first director of the US Food for Peace programme – decided to propose the establishment of a whole new agency dedicated to food aid, for which he obtained the backing of President John F. Kennedy. The mandate of the new organization was to be limited to providing food for emergencies and for piloting development projects. The WFP's budget was capped and its continuation was to be reviewed after an experimental period of three years (Shaw 2009). Constitutionally, the WFP was created as a joint venture between the FAO and the UN. However, somewhat inevitably, once confirmed the organization assumed a more independent role, setting up a degree of rivalry with its neighbour and parent in Rome.<sup>10</sup>

More funds and programmes were created from the 1960s onwards accompanying a widening debate on the nature of development. Early on, the focus was international trade which had been orphaned institutionally by the inability of the US Congress to ratify the Havana Charter of the International Trade Organization proposed by the GA. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade agreed in 1948 had a limited membership of mainly developed countries among which a series of trade rounds reduced tariffs for industrial goods. With independence, a steadily growing number of primary commodity producers were being brought into UN membership, and they had no voice in GATT. Yet their development was influenced by the terms under which they traded. Two economists working in the UN – Raúl Prebisch of ECLA, recently established (1947) in Santiago de Chile, and Hans Singer of the Department of Economic

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<sup>10</sup> The author experienced this rivalry at first hand. Heading the UN office in Somalia in the 1980s, he received two separate messages from the heads of the FAO and the WFP, each requesting that notice of 'their' forthcoming food assistance to the country be forwarded to the authorities. His response to these messages asking to which agency the aid should be attributed caused considerable consternation in Rome!

Affairs in New York – both drew attention to the chronic tendency for prices of commodity exports to fall relative to prices of their manufacturing imports (Prebisch 1950; Singer 1950).

As the numerical balance in the GA began to shift in favour of developing countries, a series of conferences were held exclusively on the future global South. In 1955, 29 Asian and African countries met in Bandung, Indonesia, mainly to discuss security concerns but beginning to affirm a “third world” identity between the dominant western and eastern blocs. By the time of the Belgrade Conference of 1961, some two-thirds of the UN membership was from the developing world, excluding Eastern Europe, and the meeting saw the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The following year, 36 developing countries met in Cairo for the Conference on Problems of Developing Countries. The geographical significance of the meeting was the presence of countries from all three major regions including Latin America. The meeting appealed for the creation of a UN body to deliberate on “all vital questions relating to international trade, primary commodity trade and economic relations between developing and developed countries” (UNCTAD 1985, 10). Over the initial objections of the developing countries – partly assuaged by concerns also raised within GATT about commodity prices – the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was agreed to and began life in 1964. It was a standing conference rather than a fully fledged independent organization, designed to meet every four years but supported by a full-time secretariat in Geneva, another tenant for the Palais des Nations. UNCTAD also confirmed the existence of the Group of 77 developing countries (the original number in 1964) which, as the G77, was thereafter the main mouthpiece of the global South in subsequent global negotiations on economic and social matters (Toye 2014). Also created in the same year in Geneva was the International Trade Centre (ITC), an offshoot of GATT proposed by Brazil and other countries as a comprehensive source of specialized trade information to assist exporters from developing countries. The ITC became a joint venture of GATT (later the WTO) and the UN (Browne and Laird 2011).

The genesis of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) was even more protracted and controversial. In 1952, ECOSOC began asking for studies on manufacturing productivity, initiating a programme of research within the secretariat and eventuating in a major report on industrialization in developing countries two years later. Apart from Hans Singer, authorship included some of the brightest development minds of the day. At that juncture, very minimal assistance had been directed to industry by either the UN or the World Bank. A programme of work on industrialization was drawn up and an industry section

established in the secretariat to undertake it. By the end of the 1950s the section became a branch, and in 1961 ECOSOC recommended the creation of an industrial development centre within the secretariat, and mooted the idea of a specialized agency. The slow emergence of what became the specialized agency only in 1985 was due to ideological circumspection on the part of some developed country governments. There were misgivings about the role of a public sector organization in adopting industrial policies and promoting industrialization. Under conservative administrations, the prevailing philosophy in developed countries was one of *laissez-faire*, notwithstanding their own pursuit of industrial policy throughout their economic history. UNIDO took a risk in becoming a specialized agency, for it cut its umbilical cord with the UN budget and began to depend on its own assessed contributions under a separate governance framework. The subsequent withdrawal of many of its original developed country members (and their funding) has led to a series of existential crises (Browne 2012).

Accompanying the growth in the number of UN “funds and programmes”, as they were known generically, the UN sought to increase financial support for its operations. EPTA supported modest technical assistance projects, but the secretariat had also been calling during the 1950s for a “special UN fund for economic development” (SUNFED) intended to back the conclusions of its analysis about the capital needs of the developing countries. The main developed country donors were reluctant to provide capital assistance through the UN, however, where they were in a minority, preferring instead to channel funding through the World Bank which they could more easily control through weighted voting. The long debate was ultimately resolved at the end of the decade with the establishment of a generously funded International Development Association (IDA) at the World Bank (grant money which the Bank could on-lend on highly concessional terms) and a much smaller Special Fund at the UN, intended mainly to finance pre-investment activities. For the main donor countries, this solution held its own logic. By turning the World Bank into the largest multilateral donor, however, the UN became a much smaller secondary source of aid. (In later years, the World Bank also became much more active in the provision of grant-funded technical assistance, shrinking the aid territory of the UN even further).

By the mid-1960s, therefore, the operations of a now much larger number of UN development family members were being supported by funding from both EPTA and the Special Fund. But the respective purposes of these two sources were becoming blurred and the need for a merger became more compelling. In 1965, it was decided to combine EPTA and the Special Fund and create the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which opened its doors in January of the following year. UNDP

was more of a funding mechanism than a programme, intended to manage and coordinate the burgeoning system from a putative centre, much as EPTA had been for the specialized agencies. As we see in Chapter 5, however, UNDP gradually took on the trappings of a fully-fledged programme undertaking its own operational work across the whole range of UN development responsibilities. So the centre did not hold; in fact, strong centrifugal forces were set off within the UNDS, which successive efforts have failed to rein back.

Continuing to the present era, the UN has created additional funds and programmes, each with unique origins and responding to perceptions by member-states of emerging development challenges. Except for UNCTAD and UNIDO – which have been the two UN development organizations whose creation was most strongly urged by developing countries, and which became prominent mouthpieces in economic and trade matters – the impulses for new organizations have usually come from the richer countries of the North which financially supported, and still support, the major part of the UN's operational activities. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 1969) grew out of a population programme first incubated in UNDP. Its creation as an independent organization was in part a reflection of narrow Malthusian concerns among the developed countries about population growth in the global South. These concerns translated opportunistically into fund-pulling potential, even though there was little enthusiasm initially among developing countries (Murphy 2006). From population control, the mandate of UNFPA has become broader over time, encompassing reproductive health, HIV/AIDS response and women's empowerment.

The proposal for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) was also initially opposed by many developing countries as a distraction from what they considered more mainstream development issues. The first global conference on the 'human environment' was held in 1972 in Stockholm, where it was decided to create UNEP. It was established in Nairobi, Kenya, the first new global UN organization to be established in a developing country. In 1978 it was joined in Nairobi by the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), dedicated to issues of urbanization, which had begun life as a programme within UNEP.

Three further UN entities have been added to the development family (see Figure 5.1 and Box 5.1). Rather than representing a further proliferation in numbers, they arose as a result of consolidation. The global pandemic of HIV and AIDS was outgrowing the operational capacities of WHO in the 1990s; and in 1996, ten UN organizations plus the World Bank came together to form the UN Joint Programme (UNAIDS), headquartered in Geneva beside WHO. UNAIDS pools the resources and

the expertise of the 11 secretariats and offers strategic guidance to afflicted countries, in recognition of the many medical and non-medical facets of the disease.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) came the following year as the result of a merger of two pre-existing Vienna-based programmes: the UN International Drug Control Programme and the Division for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. UNODC is a small organization but with a huge mandate which includes organized crime and trafficking, corruption, crime prevention, criminal justice reform, prevention of drug abuse and combating terrorism. In 2010, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) brought together four existing entities already within the secretariat, creating a new organization in New York to advocate for women's rights and empowerment.

The UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in New York and the UN Office of Project Services (UNOPS) are sometimes included as separate family members. DESA undertakes policy research and information gathering on issues ranging from population and public administration to financing for development and global goal-setting. It also acts as the secretariat to ECOSOC, and services several functional commissions established under ECOSOC auspices (as anticipated by Article 68 of the Charter) and effectively oversees the UN's main development agenda. UNOPS began life as a department within UNDP when that organization decided to become a self-contained development entity and begin executing its own projects. UNOPS now acts as a procurement mechanism on behalf of different UN bodies as well as some governments.

There are also five research and training institutes under UN auspices. Four of these are modest in size, but the exception is the UN University, with headquarters in Tokyo and with (at the latest count) 12 specialized research institutes in cities around the world.

### **Regional and Country Presence**

Most of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes have regional and country representation. Their establishment was authorized by each governing body separately, without reference to other organizations in the UN system, and the number of these field offices has grown throughout the UN's existence. When a new UN organization was established, it has wanted its own field staff. At the latest count (2016) there were 1650 separate representative offices in the UN system as a whole (including peacekeeping operations), nearly all in developing countries – an increase of 18 per cent since 2010. The number of development offices was 1350,

an increase of more than 30 per cent in six years (Browne 2016). In some countries the number of individual UN offices is over 20.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AS A FOURTH PILLAR

The main functional ‘pillars’ of the UN system – outlined schematically in Figure 1.1 – were anticipated by the Charter but not fully prescribed. Peace and security were to be managed by the SC, serviced by appropriate arrangements within the secretariat, which had to be established. The relief and humanitarian functions grew up beside the expanding development system. The UN’s main humanitarian organizations were UNHCR and the WFP, but UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and several other primarily development organizations also took on shorter-term relief functions. The UN’s humanitarian work was initially clustered with and coordinated by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which became the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with offices in New York, Geneva and around the world. Thus, while the two pillars of humanitarian and development work have always overlapped, OCHA has provided the focus for the UN’s relief operations.

The fourth pillar associated with the UN system is that of justice and human rights. The ICJ and its functions were explicitly defined by the Charter. Much later in the 1990s, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was set up, also in The Hague. Allied human rights concerns, however, had different origins. The Charter contains several references to human rights, and provided for the establishment of a commission as an organ of ECOSOC to consider an international bill of human rights (Article 68). It was another Roosevelt (Eleanor, wife of the president) who was the first chair of the commission, set up in 1946, and who played a critical role in securing agreement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights two years later. The UDHR shone like an early beacon of UN values and was heralded as an early success for the organization. It has been claimed that “no other system of universal values has spread so far and so fast” (Normand and Zaidi 2008, 8). The gaps between values and practice have been marked, however, and for a long time the UN lacked an effective mechanism to monitor compliance. The Commission on Human Rights came in for heavy criticism for sheltering rather than exposing the violations of egregious regimes. But in 2006, it was refashioned into the Human Rights Council, which has adopted more effective Universal Periodic Reviews applicable to every member-state. The UN’s record in promoting and protecting human rights and justice are reviewed in Chapter 3.

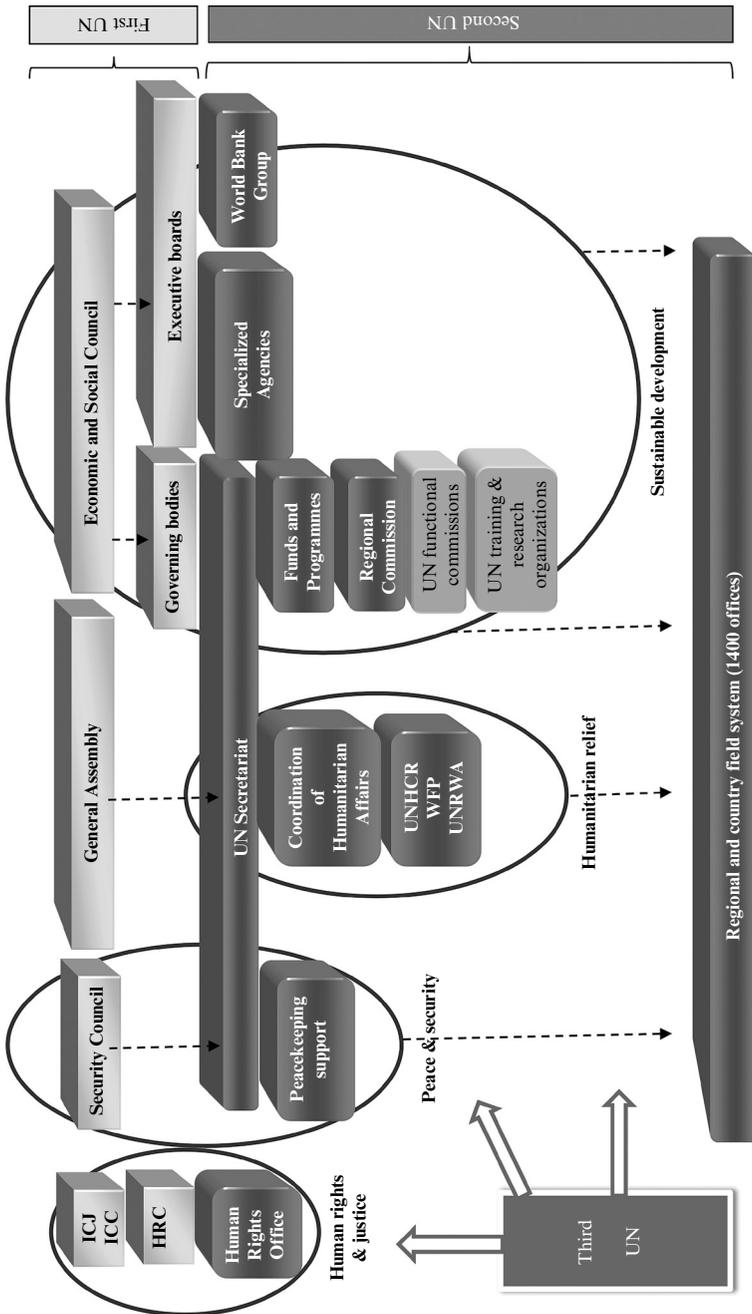


Figure 1.1 The four pillars of the UN system

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