

International organisations

An **international organisation** is an institution generally established by a treaty and governed by international laws. Its main objectives are helping to set the international agenda, mediating public choices and facilitating cooperation and coordination among member nations.

The most notable international organisations are the following:

- **UNO** (United Nations Organization) is the largest and most familiar intergovernmental organisation. Its role is to maintain



international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and achieving international cooperation. The UNO is based in New York City, with its other main offices in Geneva.

- **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is an intergovernmental military alliance between thirty North American and European countries. It implements the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on 4th April 1949. Its role is to provide collective, mutual defence among its independent member states in case of military attack by any external force.

- **WHO** (World Health Organization) is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.



The WHO was established by constitution on 7th April 1948, which is commemorated as World Health Day. Its Constitution states that its purpose "is the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health". It provides leadership on critical health matters, ensures cooperation among nations when common actions are needed and holds the research international agenda. It is based in Geneva.

- **UNESCO** (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is an agency of the United Nations aimed at building a culture of peace and inclusive societies through information, education and communication. It has five major program areas: education, social/human sciences, natural sciences, culture and communication/information. It is headquartered in Paris and is composed of 193 member states.

- **FAO** (Food and Agricultural Organization) is a specialised agency of the United Nations aimed at leading international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. It was founded in 1945 and is based in Rome.

- **UNHCR** (The United Nations High Commissioner



Refugee) is an agency founded on 14th December 1950 whose headquarter is in Geneva. It works to protect and assist refugees everywhere in the world. Its role is to provide safe refuge in another State to people in need of asylum, and eventually help them go back home or resettle. It also provides critical emergency assistance such as potable water, sanitations and healthcare.



1 Match each definition with the right organisation.

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|-----------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. UNESCO | | a. It is aimed at improving food security and defeating hunger in the world. |
| 2. UNO | | b. It provides mutual military defence among member states. |
| 3. NATO | | c. Its function is to ensure peace and cooperation among countries. |
| 4. FAO | | d. It is responsible for global public health. |
| 5. WHO | | e. It promotes culture of peace through education, information and communication. |
| 6. UNHCR | | f. It ensures assistance for refugees. |



2 Read the text and write a brief summary using no more than 60 words.

The Birth of WHO

During the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organisation, Szeming Sze, a Chinese delegate, together with some Norwegian and Brazilian delegates, worked on the creation of an international health organisation under the auspices of the new United Nations. After failing to get a resolution passed on the subject, Alger Hiss, the Secretary General of the conference, recommended using a declaration to establish such an organisation. Sze and the other delegates worked together to write the declaration

that called for an international conference on health. The use of the word “world”, rather than “international”, emphasised the truly global nature of the organisation objectives. The constitution of the World Health Organization was signed by all 51 countries of the United Nations, and by 10 other countries, on 22 July 1946. It thus became the first specialised agency of the United Nations to which every member subscribed. Its constitution formally came into force on the first World Health Day on 7 April 1948, when it was ratified by the 26th member state.

Adapted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization



3 Watch the video and answer the questions.

► [How does the United Nations work?](#) posted by RMIT University

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. How many countries signed the establishment of the UNO in 1945? | 4. Which are the permanent members of the Security Council? |
| 2. What was the original purpose of the organisation? | 5. What is the body where all the nations meet? |
| 3. What does the UNO deal with? | 6. What is the most famous document of the United Nations? |



4 Fill in the gaps with the missing words.

Africa ■ anniversary ■ emergency ■ humanitarian ■ homeless ■ prize ■ refugees ■ restart ■ revolution ■ war

The History of UNHCR

The agency of the United Nations High Commissioner for 1. (UNHCR) was created in 1950, after the Second World 2., to help millions of Europeans who had fled or lost their homes. The commission had three years to complete the work. In 1954, UNHCR won the Nobel Peace 3. for its incredible work in Europe. But it was not long before the organisation faced another major 4. In 1956, during the Hungarian 5., 200,000 fled to Austria. Recognizing the Hungarians as refugees, UNHCR led efforts to resettle them. This event and its consequences shaped the way 6. organisations would deal with refugee crises in the future. During the 1960s, the decolonisation of 7. brought about a number of refugee crises in this continent. UNHCR also helped 8. people in Asia and Latin America over the following two decades. In 1981, it received a second Nobel Peace Prize for the worldwide assistance provided to refugees. UNHCR now has more than 17,324 personnel and works in 135 countries. In 2015, it celebrated its 65th 9. UNHCR has helped over 50 million refugees to 10. their lives since it was established.

Adapted from: <https://www.unhcr.org/history-of-unhcr.html>