



UNITED NATIONS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Geeta,
Associate Professor in Economics,
Sanatan Dharam Mahila Mahavidyalya, Hansi (Hisar).
Email: geetadahiya197@gmail.com

Abstract

The United Nations acts as a global catalyst for social and economic advancement. The UN advances international collaboration, healthcare, education, gender equality, and sustainable development through a variety of programmes. The UN and its affiliated organisations play a significant role in encouraging international cooperation in the economic and social arenas. The UN's efforts are essential in creating a more inclusive and prosperous world for all. The UN held that sustained peace required social and economic improvement on a global scale. As a result, the UN spends a sizable amount of money on social and economic programmes. The United Nations has placed a strong emphasis on the economic and social development of newly independent developing countries since 1960. To address problems like food shortages, housing instability, and illness—all of which have negative economic and social repercussions—many programmes are being developed in these countries.

The General Assembly receives assistance from the United Nations Economic and Social Council in the establishment of international plans for economic and social cooperation and progress. By tackling social challenges, this council seeks to improve the effectiveness of global peace. This holds that political tactics are not the only route to bring about world peace. In 1945, it was founded. Only 18 member states made up this council at the outset. The United Nations expanded its membership to 27 countries by a charter amendment in 1965, and to 54 members in 1971. A three-year term is allotted to each member. Every year, one-third of the members are let go, adding 18 new member states to the group. An expelled member is also eligible for reelection. According to the United Nations, economic and social development must be prioritised by all countries if stable peace is to be established.

Keywords: General Assembly, United Nations, Peace, Cooperation



Introduction

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) was created to emphasise the notion that long-term peace and security require not only political and military stability but also a high standard of living around the globe. This also requires higher levels of employment rate and economic and social development (Alberti and Bertucci, 2005).

The mission of ECOSOC is to advance the stability and well-being required for peaceful and amicable international relations. In addition to strengthening and safeguarding basic liberties and human rights, it seeks to address the world's economic, social, health, and other humanitarian issues. The main responsibility of those acting under the authority of the General Assembly is to coordinate the activities of specialised agencies working in a variety of disciplines to improve the socioeconomic conditions of people all over the world.

Research, reporting, and recommendations to the General Assembly on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related concerns are among the duties of ECOSOC. The Commissions on the Status of Women, Asia and the Far East, Population, Economic, Employment and Development, and Human Rights are among the important regional and executive commissions that have been established (Browne, 2012).

The primary goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), eradicating poverty and addressing inequality, continue to be significant challenges for the developing countries. Despite the fact that these countries have achieved considerable strides, there have recently been setbacks, particularly in terms of the prevalence of extreme poverty. This condition should cause concern, especially in view of the current global context, which is characterised by trade tensions between the United States and China and climate change. Low regional productivity, excessive inequality, social exclusion, and environmental neglect have all been made worse by the region's slow economic growth and considerable demographic and labour market changes.

The United Nations (UN) is instrumental in fostering global social and economic growth. The UN strives for sustainable development, poverty reduction, better healthcare and education, gender equality, and other social and economic concerns through its numerous agencies, programmes, and initiatives.

Sustainable development: To help developing nations' economy grow, the UN offers support. Programmes like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to foster



entrepreneurship, encourage job development, and create sustainable livelihood prospects. To promote economic growth, these programmes also concentrate on expanding trade, investment, and technology transfer.

Poverty Reduction: Reducing poverty is one of the UN's main goals. Working together, the UNDP, World Bank, and other organisations assist developing countries in putting poverty-reduction plans into action. They put a lot of effort towards expanding access to needs like food, safe drinking water, healthcare, and education. The UN also supports debt forgiveness, fair trade practises, and financial aid to support developing countries' efforts to fight poverty.

Health and Education: The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) are two prominent UN organisations that address health and education-related concerns. They work to improve health-care systems, get rid of illnesses, aid in vaccination drives, and make sure that everyone has access to top-notch education. These activities support social evolution by ensuring the welfare and knowledge base of societies.

Gender Equality: According to the UN, achieving gender equality is essential in securing sustainable development. The UN Women organisation seeks to eliminate gender-based violence, advance women's political participation, empower women economically, and ensure that women and girls have equitable access to healthcare and education.

International Partnerships and collaboration: The UN serves as a forum for international collaboration, facilitating coordination between its members and other nations as well as between civil society, business, and international organisations. This cooperation is essential for mobilising resources, exchanging knowledge and skills, and successfully carrying out development projects.

Functions and Authority of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

The following are the duties and authority of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):

To act as a focal point for discussion of major, multidisciplinary world-wide economic and social issues and to advise Member States and the UN system as a whole on how to proceed.



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- to conduct research, write on, and offer advice on matters relating to international economic, social, cultural, and educational issues;
 - to encourage and monitor conformity to everyone's fundamental liberties and rights;
 - to call an international conference, craft an agreement on the subjects covered by it, and then deliver it to the General Assembly;
 - defining the relationship between particular agencies and the UN and signing agreements with them;
 - to coordinate special agencies' efforts after consulting and making recommendations to the General Assembly of the UN;
 - upon consent from the General Assembly or at the request of certain agencies, to provide services to UN members;
 - to contact NGOs with issues that the Council oversees.

Significant UN Initiatives for Socio-economic Development

Country classifications as developed or developing are typically based on the size and strength of their economies. North America and all of Europe are home to the developed nations, which are located north of the equator. In terms of industrial growth, high per capita income, and other sectors like health care and education, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other nations have all achieved considerable strides. They are in charge of global commerce. Famine, disease, and widespread poverty are common in the world's developing countries, which are found in Africa, Asia, and South America. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the people on earth live in developing countries. Three-fourths of the world's population resides in these 130 developing nations, but typical personal wages are pitifully low. They lived under colonial rule for many years. The economic and industrial advancement of the inhabitants of these colonies was not a concern of the colonial authorities. For financial benefit, they took advantage of the natural riches of underdeveloped nations.

Many of the colonies attained independence and joined the UN starting in 1960s. As their majority in the UN had increased, they were able to create new organisations. The First



Development Decade was launched by the United Nations. Several international agencies, including the International Development Association, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, were founded in the 1960s through emerging nations' initiative. In order to promote international trade for developing nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964. There are several benefits for the emerging nations.

Several programmes designed to promote trade and economic cooperation between developing countries at the regional and sub-regional levels have received major assistance from UNCTAD. Additionally, it has promoted technological help. There is a group of developing countries inside UNCTAD. In conversations with wealthier countries about trade and economic issues, it has pushed for collaboration and solidarity among impoverished countries. For example, it made it more challenging for developing nations to export necessities like cotton and coffee to less developed nations, where consistent pricing is desired.

Concerns about the unequal nature of the global economic system were raised by the UN General Assembly and UNCTAD. To safeguard the economic interests of emerging nations, the United Nations proposed for the creation of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974. This petition was based on the principles of justice and equity for all nations, rich and poor.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by the United Nations at a conference that year. The eradication of severe poverty, the completion of universal primary education, the enhancement of maternal health, and the decrease in infant mortality rates are some of the objectives. All UN Member States unanimously agreed to accept the development targets, which provide benchmarks for assessing development progress by addressing a variety of global issues by the year 2015, including poverty and lack of access to healthcare and education.

UN Development Agency Network

The system used by the United Nations to organise, coordinate, manage, and carry out its economic and social programmes is complicated and decentralised. On the organisational pyramid the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and General Assembly are at the very top. The General Assembly oversees and controls all societal and economic activity. ECOSOC



has received operational support from functional commissions and is entirely focused on this task. Several of them include the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Social Development, and the Commission on Narcotic Substances (Mertus and Mertus, 2010).

Another choice is regional economic commissions, which focus on issues particular to their respective regions. The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) are the five commissions (Oestreich, 2014).

There are specialised organisations inside the UN. Since they operate independently of UN authority, these organisations are regarded as autonomous organisations even though they are a component of the UN system. Each organisation has its own headquarter, bylaws, personnel, and funding. Each was established as a consequence of an international conference, just like the United Nations. These specialised organisations can have members without being members of the UN. Everyone is welcome to join these groups. Specialised agency members may become non-member states and join the UN. A treaty with another country or an agreement between the agency and the UN creates the intergovernmental entity known as a specialised agency. The agreement reached between the agency and ECOSOC will then need to be approved by the General Assembly.

Activities for Development Assistance

The leading development organisation in the UN system, the UNDP was established in 1965. For underdeveloped nations, collaborating with UNDP is more convenient. Even if UNDP is unable to offer cash aid, it can still assist developing nations by setting up training programmes, deploying technical experts, and other ways.

Several of the active initiatives

The UNDP country programme makes gender equality one among its primary goals. The UNDP Food Security Programme in India has addressed the feminization of agriculture and women's empowerment in order to achieve long-term human development. In May 2001, the UNDP declared the establishment of a new UNDP Democratic Governance Trust Fund. Despite India's 50 years of independence, the majority of those living in slums in both rural and urban areas are still uninsured by the country's health-care system. This fund would be used to launch



initiatives in the least developed countries aimed at improving parliamentary systems, preventing violence, and fostering peace. This effort has the backing of the UNDP (Singh, 2010).

International Children's Emergency Fund of the United Nations (UNICEF)

UNICEF's sole mission is to improve the lives of children who are living in poverty. UNICEF has worked on initiatives in the areas of health, education, eliminating malaria, nutrition, rural development, family and child welfare, and emergency aid in order to improve child welfare. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965 in appreciation of its social and humanitarian work. There is a lot of focus on India in the U.S.

In order to provide a healthier environment for kids in India, UNICEF discovered the issue of too much flouride in groundwater supplies. The most seriously afflicted states are Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Immunisation is a crucial WHO programme for the Polio Eradication Programme. The first disease to be wiped out in the twenty-first century was polio. The **WHO's campaign against tobacco use, especially in poor nations, is a key UN health agency programme.**

Group of the World Bank

The development initiatives of some UN agencies, which were covered in the part above, call for large monetary outlays. For instance, the entire \$670 million dollar yearly budget of UNDP is allocated to provide development aid. The most crucial element of progress is capital (Svenson, 2015).

The two most important financial institutions under the United Nations are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). These organisations are sometimes referred to as the Bretton Woods institutions because they were established at the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, United States, in December 1945. The IMF provides short-term loans to governments to aid in their efforts to address balance-of-payments imbalances.

The World Bank Group is the primary multilateral source of funding for infrastructure development projects. Funding for development projects has reached a current amount of almost \$300 billion. However, the World Bank and the IMF are subject to a great deal of criticism. Rich nations hold authority over them. Furthermore, the UN has no authority over



them. They are not controlled democratically. The one-vote-per-nation rule imposed by the General Assembly does not apply to voting in these organisations. The number of votes that each member country has is weighted, which means that it is based on how much money it gives or how interested it is in these organisations. Regional development banks like the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which have made considerable contributions to the finance of hundreds of projects in their respective regions, are important sources of multilateral development financing (Weiss, 2010).

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has been a significant force for social and economic progress. The UN has contributed to raise living standards, lowering poverty, enhancing health and education, and promoting sustainable development all across the world through its numerous agencies and programmes.

The UN has made some significant contributions to social and economic progress, including the following:

A significant public health achievement that saved millions of lives was the elimination of smallpox in 1980.

Eight goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by world leaders in 2000. In lowering poverty, hunger, and disease, the MDGs were mainly effective, and they also helped to set the stage for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs were endorsed by top world leaders in 2015. The 17 SDGs seek to make the world more sustainable and fair by the year 2030. The UN has been instrumental in advancing global development cooperation. The UN has aided in bringing nations from all over the world together to collaborate on shared development concerns through its numerous forums and processes.

There are difficulties in the UN's efforts on social and economic development. Many people still live in poverty, and the globe is still a terribly unequal place. The COVID-19 epidemic and climate change are only two of the many fresh concerns the UN is currently dealing with.

The UN is nevertheless dedicated to achieving social and economic development for all, notwithstanding these obstacles. Building a more tranquil, wealthy, and sustainable world for future generations depends on the UN's work in this field.



The UN aims to encourage social and economic development in a variety of methods, some of which are listed below. It:

- (i) provides developing countries with financial aid. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN organisation responsible for providing development assistance, commits billions of dollars in financing annually to support poor nations in achieving their development objectives;
- (ii) provides underdeveloped countries with technical help. The UN additionally offers technical support to developing countries in sectors like infrastructure, agriculture, health, and education. This aid helps countries increase their ability for self-development;
- (iii) encourages collaboration between countries for progress. Regular summits and conferences on development are held by the UN, which also provide a platform for countries to exchange ideas and experiences. This promotes international cooperation and consensus-building on development-related topics;
- (iv) advocates for marginalised and disadvantaged people's rights. The UN actively defends the rights of the underprivileged and marginalised. It aims to guarantee that these populations have access to necessities including housing, healthcare, and education.

Conclusion

The UN's efforts to promote social and economic development are essential to create a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world for coming generations. Although challenging, the UN's work in this area is essential. According to the UN Charter's Preamble, the organization's mission is to 'employ international machinery to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples'. The UN has started a variety of programmes to maintain world peace and security and support the social and economic advancement of developing countries. Numerous programmes and programmes aiming at enhancing economic and social development are coordinated by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the UN Secretariat. The United Nations provides the majority of multilateral aid for resolving issues related to development. Fund-raising, donations, and help are provided for development



initiatives and programmes by a number of United Nations development bodies, including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and the World Bank.

The quality of life for its residents is improved by an effective and responsive government. The foundation for societal prosperity and economic success is a healthy ecological system, and it is this system that needs to be developed. People will have more faith in their government when members of all social groups participate in making decisions that have an impact on their lives and when they have equal access to fair institutions that administer justice and deliver services. Countries having access to enough food and water would be in better position to adapt to climate change and natural disasters, transition to green economic pathways, and can support the employment of billions of people through forestry, agriculture, fisheries, and tourism by utilising nature-based solutions, such as the sustainable management and protection of land, rivers, and oceans.

UNDP is the main UN actor on climate change as a long-time partner of the Global Environment Facility and owner of the second-largest Green Climate Fund portfolio. All countries are required to contribute to making the Paris Agreement and all other environmental agreements the top priority for global growth. If this is done well, millions of people will have access to food, shelter, clean air, education, and opportunity.

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