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International Organisations 2025



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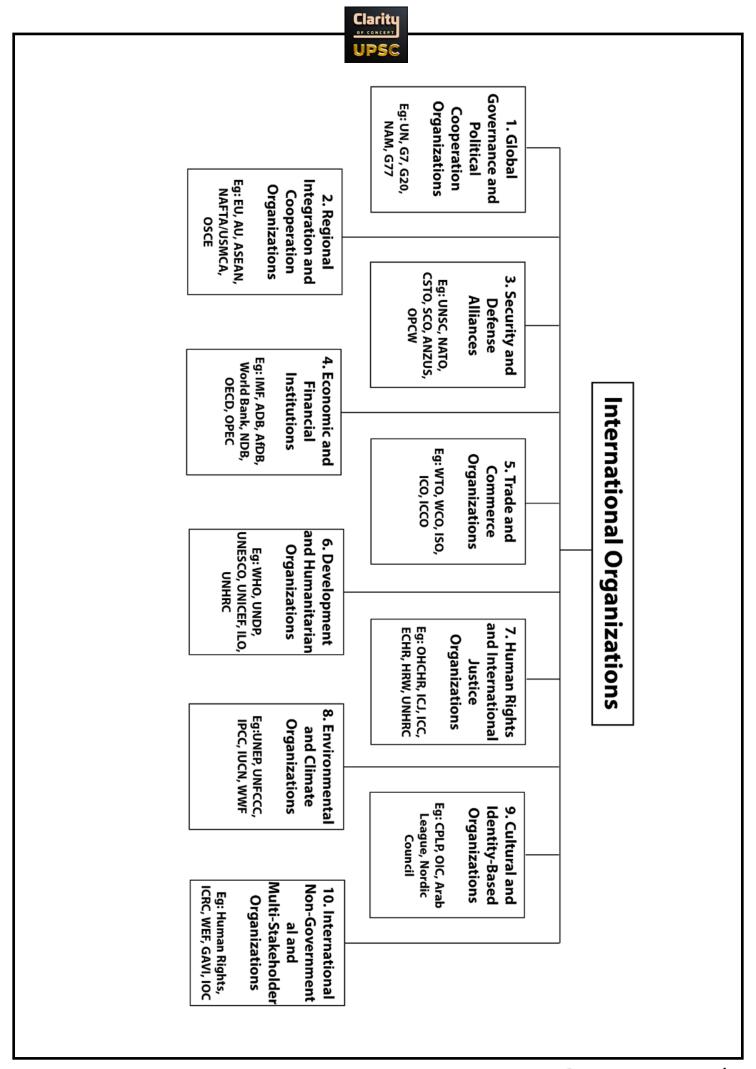
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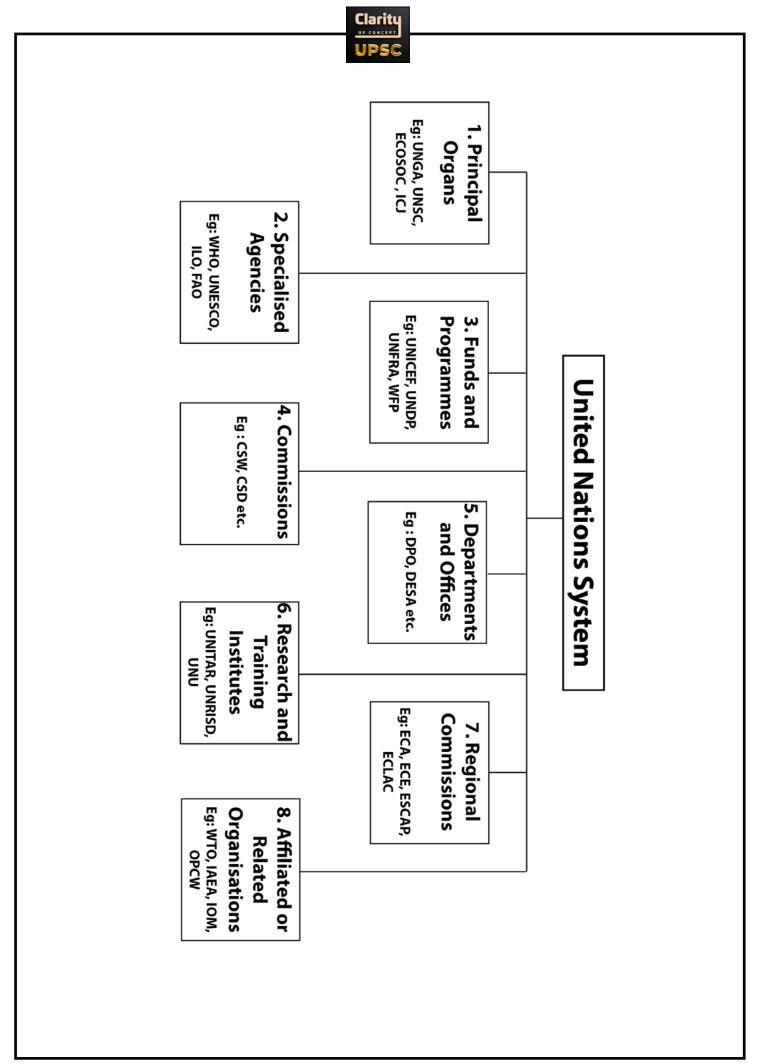
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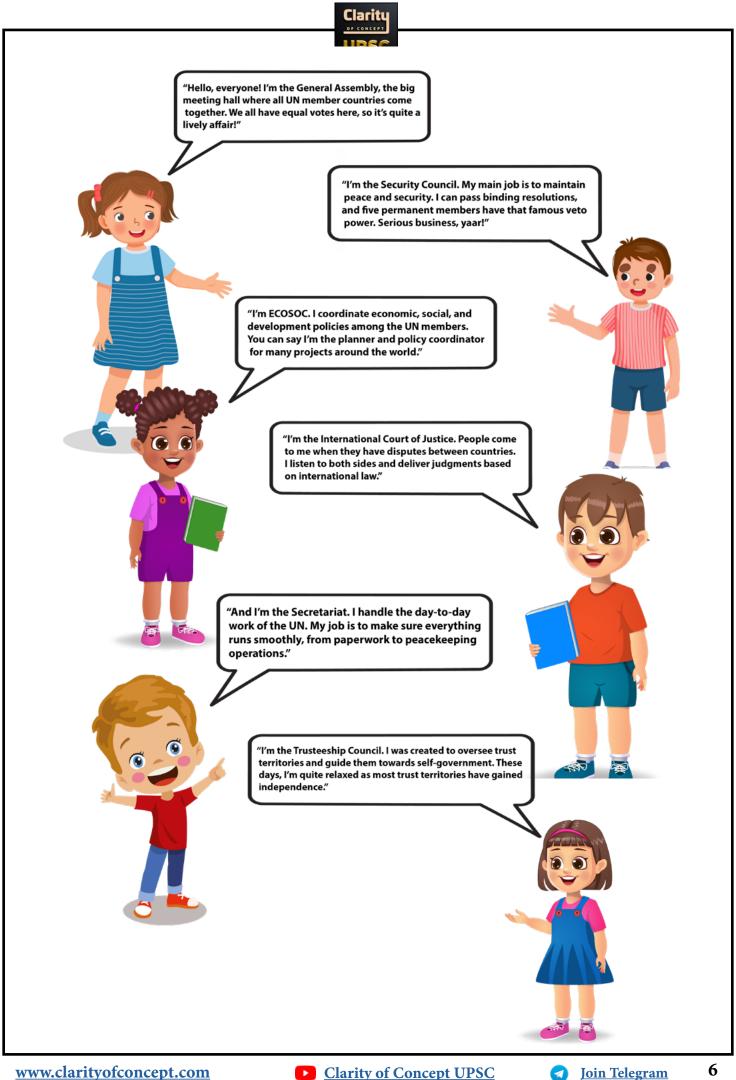
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1. Global Governance and Political Cooperation **Organizations**

These are international organizations that help countries work together on global issues. They set rules, hold discussions, and make decisions that affect the whole world. The most important among them is the United Nations (UN), which has 193 member countries and works for peace, security, development, and human rights. Other key groups include G20, G7, BRICS, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Group of 77 (G77), which focus on global political and economic cooperation. These organizations help solve world problems like climate change, war, and economic crises by bringing leaders together for discussions and agreements.

1.1 United Nations (UN) **System**

The United Nations (UN) is the most important global organization for maintaining peace, security, human rights, and development. Established in 1945, it has 193 member countries and works through its principal organs, specialized agencies, programs, and **commissions.** The UN helps resolve international conflicts, provides humanitarian aid, fights diseases, promotes education, and develops global policies on issues like climate change and poverty.

The **UN system** is divided into different bodies, each with a specific function. The principal organs include the UN General Assembly (UNGA), where all member countries participate, and the UN Security Council (UNSC), which takes action on global security matters. Other important bodies like ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) focus on economic and social development, while the International Court of Justice (ICJ) settles legal disputes between nations. The UN also has specialized agencies like WHO (World Health Organization) for global

health, IMF (International Monetary Fund) for financial stability, and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) for education and culture. Additionally, the UN runs programs and funds such as UNICEF (for children's welfare) and WFP (World Food Programme) to fight hunger. Overall, the UN serves as the world's central organization for global cooperation.

1.1.1 Principal Organs

The principal organs of the United Nations (UN) are the six main bodies that carry out the core functions of the UN. They are responsible for maintaining peace, ensuring international security, upholding justice, and promoting economic and social progress. Each organ has a distinct role, with some focusing on decisionmaking, while others handle administration or legal matters. These organs work together to manage conflicts, coordinate humanitarian efforts, and create global policies. While some of them, like the UN Security Council (UNSC), have the power to enforce decisions, others, like the UN General Assembly (UNGA), serve as platforms for discussion and consensus-building. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) focuses on economic and social development, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) settles legal disputes between nations, and the UN Secretariat handles administrative tasks. The Trusteeship Council, once active in overseeing former colonies, is now inactive. Over the years, these bodies have evolved to address emerging challenges such as cyber threats, climate change, and terrorism, ensuring that the UN remains relevant in modern global governance.

1.1.1.1 UN General Assembly

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) serves as a central platform for multilateral dialogue and decision-making on a wide array of international issues.

Name of the Organization



United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The UNGA is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations. It provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of international issues, covering areas such as peace and security, development, human rights, and international law. While its resolutions are generally nonbinding, they carry significant moral and political weight.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a pressing need for an international body to promote peace, security, and cooperation among nations. The UNGA was established to provide a platform where all member states could engage in dialogue, address global challenges collectively, and work towards preventing future conflicts.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

 United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Members

- **Number of Members:** 193 member states
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to all peace-loving states that accept the obligations of the UN Charter and, in the judgment of the organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Admission of new members is decided by the General

Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: All internationally recognized sovereign states are members, with the exception of the Holy See (Vatican City), which holds observer status.

India's Membership

• Yes – India is a founding member of the United Nations (joined October 1945) and thus participates fully in the UN General Assembly.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The UNGA's key functions include:

- **Deliberation:** Discussing and making recommendations on a wide range of international issues.
- **Budgetary Oversight:** Considering and approving the UN budget and establishing the financial assessments of member states.
- **Elections and Appointments:** Electing non-permanent members to the Security Council, members of other UN councils and organs, and appointing the Secretary-General upon the Security Council's recommendation.
- Standard-Setting and **Codification:** Playing a central role in the process standard-setting and the codification law. of international

Recent Activities

- **Membership Changes:** No new member states have been admitted in the past four years.
- **Major Resolutions:**
 - » **2023:** Adopted a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza amidst escalating conflicts.
 - » 2024: Endrsed the "Pact for the Future." aiming to address global challenges such

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as climate change, artificial intelligence governance, and inequality.

 Governance Updates: Ongoing discussions on reforms to enhance the transparency and efficiency of the General Assembly's processes.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Middle East Conflict: In late 2024, the UNGA called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, reflecting global concern over the escalating violence and humanitarian crisis.
- Global Challenges: Adoption of the "Pact for the Future" in 2024, outlining commitments to tackle pressing issues like climate change, artificial intelligence, and global inequality.

India-Specific Developments

- Climate Action: In February 2025, the UN called on India, recognized as a 'solar superpower,' to submit a more robust climate action plan, emphasizing its pivotal role in global sustainability efforts.
- **UNGA Engagement:** The President of the UNGA concluded a tour of India in February 2025, highlighting India's active participation in multilateral discussions and its contributions to UN initiatives.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: The UNGA is the only UN body with universal representation, allowing each member state an equal voice in deliberations.
- Similar Organizations: Unlike the UN Security Council, which has binding decision-making authority and a limited membership with permanent members holding veto power, the UNGA's decisions are generally non-binding but benefit from the legitimacy of universal participation.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Understanding the structure and functions

- of the UNGA is crucial for topics related to international relations.
- Awareness of India's engagements and contributions to the UNGA provides insights into the country's foreign policy and multilateral diplomacy.
- Keeping abreast of recent UNGA resolutions and initiatives helps in answering questions on current global issues and India's stance on them.

1.1.1.2 UN Security Council (UNSC)

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a principal organ of the United Nations, entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Name of the Organization

• United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The UNSC is one of the six main organs of the United Nations, bearing the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. It has the authority to make binding decisions that member states are obligated to implement, including the imposition of sanctions and authorization of the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a critical need for an international body capable of preventing future conflicts and ensuring global peace. The UNSC was established to provide a mechanism for prompt and effective action in response to threats to international peace and security.

Type



Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

 United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Members

- **Number of Members: 15**
- Permanent Members (P5):
 - » China
 - » France
 - » Russia
 - » United Kingdom
 - » United States
- Non-Permanent Members: 10 members elected by the General Assembly for twoyear terms.
- Criteria for Membership: Non-permanent members are elected based on regional representation and their contributions to international peace and security.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** The five permanent members were the principal Allied powers in World War II. Non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly, considerina equitable geographical distribution and the member states' contributions to peace and security.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** The permanent members hold veto power substantive resolutions. have been ongoing discussions about reforming the UNSC to include permanent representation for other regions, such as Africa and countries like India, to better reflect contemporary global dynamics.

India's Membership

No – India is not a permanent member of the 15-member Council. It has, however, been elected as a non-permanent UNSC member multiple times (most recently for 2021–2022). (India aspires to permanent membership but currently serves only on a rotating basis.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The UNSC's primary functions include:

- Maintaining International Peace and **Security:** Assessing threats and taking appropriate measures, including sanctions and military action.
- Investigating **Disputes:** Mediating conflicts that might lead to international friction.
- Formulating Plans for Arms Regulation: Developing strategies for arms control and disarmament.
- **Recommending New Members:** Advising the General Assembly on the admission of new UN members.
- **Secretary-General:** Appointing the Recommending candidates for the UN's chief administrative officer.

Recent Activities

- Membership Changes: Non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms. Recent elections have seen countries like India (2021-2022), Ireland (2021-2022), and Kenya (2021-2022) serve on the Council.
- Major Resolutions:
 - » **2022:** Adopted the Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.
 - » **2023:** Addressed conflicts in regions such as Ukraine and Sudan, emphasizing ceasefires and humanitarian aid.
- **Governance Updates:** Ongoing debates on reforming the veto power and expanding permanent membership to include nations like India and countries from the African continent.



Recent News & Initiatives

- **UNSC Reform Discussions:** In September 2024, the United States expressed support for adding two permanent seats for African nations and additional representation for small island developing states, aiming to make the Council more representative of current global realities.
- Global Conflict Responses: The UNSC has been actively engaged in addressing ongoing conflicts, including those in Ukraine and the Middle East, though its effectiveness has been challenged by the vetoes exercised by permanent members.

India-Specific Developments

- Non-Permanent Membership: served as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the 2021-2022 term, marking its eighth tenure. During this period, India focused on issues like maritime security, counter-terrorism, and peacekeeping.
- **UNSC Presidency:** India held the rotating presidency of the UNSC in August 2021 and December 2022. Notably, in December Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj became the first Indian woman to preside over the Security Council.
- **Peacekeeping Contributions:** India remains one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions, with over 5,500 troops and police deployed as of recent counts.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: The UNSC is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states and to authorize the use of force. The veto power held by its five permanent members is a distinctive feature that significantly influences its decision-making process.

Similar Organizations:

» UN General Assembly (UNGA): While the UNGA includes all 193 member

- states and makes recommendations, its resolutions are non-binding. In contrast, the UNSC has binding decision-making authority.
- » International Court of Justice (ICJ): The ICJ adjudicates disputes between states based on international law, but it lacks enforcement powers like the UNSC.
- » **G7** and **G20**: These are influential economic and political forums, but they lack the legal authority of the UNSC in global security matters.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » The UNSC and its reforms have been key topics in UPSC Prelims and Mains, particularly under International Relations.
- » Ouestions have been asked about India's stance on UNSC reform, the role of the P5, and the significance of veto power.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » The UNSC is the only UN body with binding powers under the UN Charter.
- » India has served eight times as a nonpermanent member (most recently in 2021-2022).
- » **Veto Power:** Only the P5 members have the power to veto any substantive resolution.
- » UNSC Reforms: India has been advocating for permanent membership, along with Brazil, Germany, and Japan (G4 group).
- » **UN Peacekeeping:** India is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping forces.

For UPSC exams, staying updated with India's role in UNSC, ongoing reform debates, and key resolutions is essential, as these topics frequently appear in Prelims, Mains, and interviews.



The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) serves as a central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking on sustainable development.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, responsible for coordinating the economic, social, humanitarian, and cultural activities of the UN and its specialized agencies. It serves as a central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the UN system.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

Established under the UN Charter in 1945. ECOSOC was created to promote international cooperation and address global economic and social challenges in the aftermath of World War II. Its formation aimed to foster economic stability, social progress, and higher standards of living worldwide.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Members

Number of Members: 54 member states

Criteria for Membership: Members are elected by the UN General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. Seats are allocated based on geographical representation: 14 from African states, 11 from Asian states, 6 from Eastern European states, 10 from Latin American and Caribbean states, and 13 from Western European and other states.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Elections consider geographical equitable distribution and the member states' commitment to international economic and social cooperation.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** Membership is open to all UN member states, with elections ensuring representation from various regions.

India's Membership

Yes - India serves on ECOSOC in elected terms. It has been elected to the 54-member ECOSOC numerous times, including the 2022-24 term. (ECOSOC members rotate; India frequently occupies a seat.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

ECOSOC's primary functions include:

- Policy Dialogue: Serving as a central discussing international for economic and social issues.
- **Coordination:** Coordinating the activities of UN specialized agencies, functional commissions, and regional commissions.
- **Standard-Setting:** Formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the UN system.
- Consultative Status: Granting consultative status to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), allowing them to participate in discussions.



Recent Activities

- 2023 Operational Activities Segment: Held from May 23 to 25, 2023, focusing on enhancing the UN development system's support for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- India's Election to Subsidiary Bodies: In 2023, India was elected to key ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, including the UN Statistical Commission and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Recent News & Initiatives

India-UN Development **Partnership** Fund: Celebrated six years collaborative partnership in November 2023, highlighting India's commitment to global sustainable development and South-South cooperation.

India-Specific Developments

- May 2024: In May 2024, during the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, India highlighted its substantial contributions to the UN Development System (UNDS):
 - » Financial **Contributions:** India contributed over \$141 million to the UNDS in 2021, increasing to over \$207 million in 2022.
 - » India-UN Development Partnership Fund: Established in 2017, with a commitment of \$150 million, the Fund supports 78 projects across 55 countries, focusing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and prioritizing Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- November 2023: On November 29, 2023, India and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation commemorated six years of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. The \$150 million Fund has supported 76 projects in 54 countries, focusing on areas such as

- climateresilience, livelihood development, health and sanitation, education and skills, and agriculture and food security. This initiative exemplifies India's commitment to global sustainable development and South-South cooperation.
- **Leadership Roles:** India has played a significant role in shaping ECOSOC's agenda, with the first president of ECOSOC being an Indian. In recent years, India has continued its active engagement, contributing to discussions on sustainable development and global cooperation.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: ECOSOC serves as the central platform within the UN for discussing international economic and social issues, coordinating efforts across various specialized agencies and commissions.
- Similar Organizations: While the UN General Assembly addresses a broad range of issues, ECOSOC specifically focuses on economic and social matters, providing a more specialized forum for these discussions.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Understanding ECOSOC's structure, functions, and its role within the UN system is crucial for international relations and global governance topics.
 - » Awareness of India's contributions and recent elections to ECOSOC subsidiary bodies can provide insights into the country's diplomatic engagements.
 - » Knowledge of ECOSOC's initiatives, such as the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, highlights practical examples of international cooperation.

1.1.1.4 International Court of **Justice (ICJ)**



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) serves as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, playing a pivotal role in the peaceful resolution of international disputes and the interpretation of international law.

Name of the Organization

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, established to settle legal disputes between states in accordance with international law and to provide advisory opinions on legal questions referred by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a pressing need for a judicial body to address legal disputes between nations and to promote the rule of law at the international level. The ICJ was established in 1945 as the successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice, aiming to provide a forum for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to offer legal guidance to the international community.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• The Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands

Members

- **Number of Judges: 15**
- Criteria for Membership: Judges are elected for nine-year terms by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, ensuring representation of the

principal legal systems of the world. No two judges may be nationals of the same country.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Judges are chosen based on their qualifications and expertise in international law, with elections held in a manner that ensures geographical representation and the representation of different legal systems.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** Historically, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council have had nationals serving as judges on the ICJ. However, in recent developments, there have been instances where this tradition was not maintained, reflecting the evolving dynamics of international relations.

India's Membership

Yes – As a UN member state, India is a party to the ICJ Statute. (All UN members accept the ICJ's jurisdiction via the UN Charter.) India has also had nationals serve as ICJ judges. (In essence, India participates in the *ICJ's proceedings as needed.)*

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The ICJ's primary functions include:

- **Contentious Cases:** Settling legal disputes between states submitted to it by them, in accordance with international law.
- **Advisory Opinions:** Providing legal opinions on questions referred authorized UN organs and specialized agencies.

Recent Activities

Climate **Obligations:** Change December 2024, the ICJ commenced public hearings to provide an advisory opinion on the legal obligations of states concerning climate change, particularly focusing on the responsibilities of major greenhouse gas emitters towards small island nations threatened by rising sea



levels.

- Armenia-Azerbaijan Dispute: November 2024, the ICJ ruled that mutual anti-discrimination cases between Armenia and Azerbaijan could proceed, addressing allegations of violations of a UN anti-discrimination treaty.
- South Africa's Genocide Claim: In October 2024, South Africa submitted a comprehensive legal claim to the ICJ, accusing Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Climate Change Advisory Opinion:** The ICJ's advisory opinion on climate change obligations, expected in 2025, could significantly influence global climate policies and legal frameworks, potentially impacting numerous climate-related lawsuits worldwide.
- Palestinian **Territories** Advisory Opinion: In July 2024, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion emphasizing that the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" should be considered a single territorial unit, reinforcing the unlawful nature of the Israeli occupation and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

India-Specific Developments

- Judicial Representation: India has had a longstanding presence in the ICJ, with Judge Dalveer Bhandari serving since 2012. His tenure reflects India's commitment to international law and justice.
- **Contentious Cases:** India has been involved in cases before the ICJ, notably the Kulbhushan Jadhav case against Pakistan, where the ICJ ruled in 2019 that Pakistan must review the death sentence awarded to Jadhav, emphasizing consular access and fair trial standards.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: The ICJ is distinct in its universal jurisdiction over legal disputes

between states and its authority to provide advisory opinions on international legal questions. Unlike other international courts, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), which prosecutes individuals for crimes like genocide and war crimes, the ICJ addresses disputes between sovereign states and offers legal interpretations that quide international relations.

Similar Organizations: While both the ICJ and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) are housed in the Peace Palace in The Hague, the ICJ is a UN organ focusing on legal disputes between states, whereas the PCA provides arbitration services for a broader range of disputes involving various combinations of states, private parties, and intergovernmental organizations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The ICJ has been a topic in UPSC examinations, with questions focusing on its jurisdiction, functions, and significant cases involving India.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » **Establishment:** Founded in 1945 as the principal judicial organ of the UN.
 - » **Jurisdiction:** Handles legal disputes between states and provides advisory opinions on legal questions from authorized UN bodies.

1.1.1.5 United Nations **Secretariat**

The United Nations Secretariat is a principal organ of the UN, responsible for executing the day-to-day work mandated by the General Assembly and other main organs.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Secretariat

What it is (Nature and Function)

The UN Secretariat serves as the executive



arm of the United Nations, administering and coordinating its activities. It provides services to other principal organs and carries out tasks mandated by them. The Secretariat is organized into various departments and offices, each focusing on specific areas such as political affairs, legal matters, and public information.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

Established in 1945, the UN Secretariat was created to manage the organization's diverse functions and ensure the implementation of decisions made by its deliberative bodies. Its formation aimed to provide a centralized administrative structure to coordinate international efforts in maintaining peace, security, and cooperation.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Members

- Number of Members: The Secretariat thousands comprises tens of international civil servants.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Staff members are recruited based on merit, with consideration for equitable geographical representation. They serve as international civil servants, independent of their home governments.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Staff are selected through a competitive process, ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.

Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: The Secretary-General, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council, leads the Secretariat. As of February 2025, António Guterres of Portugal serves as the Secretary-General.

India's Membership

No – Countries are not "members" of the Secretariat. It is the UN's administrative organ composed of international civil servants. (India does contribute personnel but states themselves do not hold membership.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The UN Secretariat's primary functions include:

- Servicing Other Organs: Providing support to the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, and other UN bodies.
- Implementing Decisions: Executing the policies and programs mandated by these organs.
- Administrative **Support:** Managing peacekeeping mediating operations, international disputes, and organizing international conferences.
- Research and Information: Conducting studies and providing information on various global issues to member states.

Recent Activities

- "Our Common Agenda" Report: In September 2021, the Secretary-General presented "Our Common Agenda," outlining his vision for the future of global cooperation and multilateralism.
- High-Level Humanitarian Conference for Sudan: In February 2025, the Secretary-General addressed a conference in Addis Ababa, emphasizing the need for \$6 billion to support nearly 21 million Sudanese facing a humanitarian crisis.



Recent News & Initiatives

- World Economic Forum Address: In January 2025, the Secretary-General delivered a special address at the World Economic Forum in Davos, discussing global challenges and the importance of multilateral solutions.
- **African Union Summit Participation:** Also in January 2025, the Secretary-General attended the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, highlighting the UN's commitment to supporting peace and development in Africa.

India-Specific Developments

- **Leadership Roles:** India has continued to play an active role in the UN, with Indian diplomats holding key positions within the Secretariat and contributing to various UN initiatives.
- Peacekeeping **Contributions:** India remains one of the largest troopcontributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions, reflecting its commitment to global peace and security.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** The UN Secretariat is unique in its role as the administrative backbone of the UN, facilitating the implementation of decisions made by other principal organs.
- **Similar Organizations:** While other international organizations have secretariats (e.g., the European Commission for the EU), the UN Secretariat's global scope and diverse mandate distinguish it from regional bodies.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The role and functions of the UN Secretariat have been topics in UPSC examinations, particularly concerning international organizations and their impact on global governance.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**

- » Establishment: Formed in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the UN.
- » **Leadership:** Headed by the Secretary-General, currently António Guterres.
- » **Functions:** Implements decisions of UN bodies, administers peacekeeping operations, and provides services to other organs.
- » **Staffing:** Comprises international civil servants selected based on merit and geographical representation.

Understanding the structure and functions of the UN Secretariat is crucial for exams, as it plays a vital role in international relations and global administrative processes.

1.1.1.6 United Nations **Trusteeship Council**

The United Nations Trusteeship Council was established to oversee the administration of trust territories and ensure their progress toward selfgovernance and independence.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Trusteeship Council

What it is (Nature and Function)

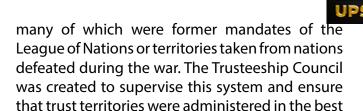
The Trusteeship Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It was designed to supervise the administration of trust territories and facilitate their transition to self-government or independence. The Council ensured that the governing countries fulfilled their responsibilities in the best interests of the inhabitants and global peace and security.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a need to oversee territories that were not yet selfgoverning. The UN established the International Trusteeship System to manage these territories,



Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

interests of their inhabitants.

Status

Suspended **Operations** With the independence of Palau in 1994, the last remaining trust territory, the Council suspended its operations, having successfully fulfilled its mandate.

Headquarters

 United Nations Headquarters, New York City, USA

Members

- Number of **Members:** Originally composed of member states administering trust territories, permanent members of the Security Council that did not administer trust territories, and other members elected by the General Assembly.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership included UN members administering trust territories, permanent members of the Security Council not administering trust territories, and additional members elected to ensure parity between administering and non-administering members.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Members were selected based on their roles as administering powers, permanent membership in the Security Council, or election by the General Assembly to maintain balance.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: The Council included all five permanent members of the Security Council. As trust territories achieved independence, the number of administering members

decreased, leading to the suspension of the Council's operations in 1994.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member. The Council, one of the UN's principal organs, has been inactive since 1994 and was composed only of certain states (primarily the permanent UNSC members). (All Trust Territories attained independence, so the Council is effectively defunct.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The primary objectives of the Trusteeship Council were:

- Supervision: Overseeing the administration of trust territories to ensure that inhabitants' interests were paramount.
- Advancement: Promoting political, economic, social, and educational progress in trust territories.
- **Self-Governance:** Facilitating the development of self-government or independence for trust territories.

Recent Activities

Since suspending its operations in 1994, the Trusteeship Council has not undertaken any activities. Its chamber at the UN headquarters is occasionally used for other purposes.

Recent News & Initiatives

There have been discussions about repurposing or abolishing the Trusteeship Council, but no definitive actions have been taken. The Council remains in existence under the UN Charter, though inactive.

India-Specific Developments

As the Trusteeship Council has been inactive since 1994, there have been no recent developments specifically involving India related to the Council.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: The Trusteeship Council

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was unique in its specific mandate to oversee the transition of trust territories to self-governance or independence, a role that concluded successfully in 1994.

Similar Organizations: While other UN bodies, such as the Decolonization Committee, have addressed issues of selfgovernance, the Trusteeship Council had a distinct legal and supervisory role under the International Trusteeship System.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The role and history of the Trusteeship Council may appear in questions related to UN organs, decolonization, and international governance structures.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Establishment: Formed in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the UN.
 - **Completion:** » Mandate Suspended operations in 1994 after all trust territories achieved self-governance or independence.
 - » Current Status: Inactive but still exists under the UN Charter.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

Understanding the history and functions of the Trusteeship Council provides insight into the UN's role in promoting self-governance and the successful decolonization efforts of the mid-20th century.

1.1.2 Specialized Agencies

The specialized agencies of the UN are independent international organizations that work closely with the UN but operate with their own structure and decision-making processes. These agencies were created to handle highly technical and specialized global issues such as health, finance, trade, labor rights, and transportation. Unlike other UN bodies, which

focus on political and diplomatic matters, specialized agencies deal with practical solutions to global challenges. They provide expertise, set international standards, and support countries in building policies and institutions. Some of the most influential specialized agencies include the World Health Organization (WHO) for global health, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Group (WBG) for economic stability and development, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for labor rights. Others, like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), work on food security, while the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulates international air travel. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promotes global education and heritage conservation. These agencies often produce global reports, conduct research, and implement largescale development programs. Their influence extends beyond government policies, as they also work with private organizations, research institutions, and civil society to address global issues efficiently.

1.1.2.1 Food and Agriculture **Organization (FAO)**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.

Name of the Organization

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its goal is to achieve food security for all and ensure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. The organization serves as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. It is also a source of knowledge and information, helping developing countries and countries in transition modernize



and improve agriculture, forestry, and fisheries practices.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a critical need to address global hunger and malnutrition. The FAO was established in 1945 to coordinate international efforts in combating hunger, improving nutrition, and promoting agricultural development. Its formation aimed to provide a platform for nations to collaborate on food security and agricultural practices.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Rome, Italy

Members

- Number of Members: 195 (194 countries and the European Union)
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any state or regional economic integration organization meeting the obligations of the FAO Constitution.

India's Membership

Yes – India was one of FAO's founding members in 1945. (India joined as a lowincome food-deficient country in 1945 and has remained a member ever since.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The FAO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

 Achieving Food Security: Ensuring people have regular access to sufficient high-quality food.

- Improving Nutrition: Promoting balanced diets and addressing malnutrition.
- **Enhancing Agricultural Productivity:** sustainable agricultural Supporting practices and innovations.
- Rural **Development:** Raising livina standards in rural populations.
- Natural Resource **Management:** Advocating for the sustainable use of land, water, and genetic resources.

Recent Activities

- **Food** Geospatial Technology for Security: In 2023, the FAO released a report highlighting how geospatial technology can advance the global food security agenda.
- Collaboration with WMO: The FAO strengthened its partnership with the Meteorological World Organization (WMO) to enhance drought management and resilience in various regions.
- Climate-Resilience Projects: In 2022, the FAO and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) signed agreements for \$60 million in funding to improve climate resilience in Benin and The Gambia.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Hunger Levels: As of mid-2024, the FAO reported that global hunger levels remain "shamefully" high, with almost 600 million people expected to be undernourished by 2030.
- Food Commodity Prices: In January 2025, the FAO reported a decline in global food commodity prices, with significant drops in sugar and vegetable oil prices.
- Foodborne Illness Report: A joint report by the FAO and the World Health Organization identified human norovirus as the leading cause of foodborne illness globally.

India-Specific Developments



- April 2023: In April 2023, FAO and the Government of India unveiled the CPF 2023–2027, outlining four priority areas:
 - » Sustainable Agricultural Production: productivity Enhancing through sustainable practices.
 - » Food and Nutrition Security: Ensuring access to nutritious food for all.
 - » Climate Resilience and Sustainable Natural Resource **Management:** Addressing climate change impacts and promoting resource conservation.
 - » Inclusive, **Gender-Responsive Agrifood Governance and Promotion** Private Sector **Investment:** Encouraging inclusive policies and private sector engagement in agriculture.
- **December 2024:** On December 23, 2024, FAO commemorated the 20th anniversary of ECTAD in New Delhi. The event highlighted ECTAD's role in strengthening animal health systems and advancing the One Health approach in India, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.
- January 2025: On January 10, 2025, FAO organized a state-level advocacy meeting in Sikkim to bolster efforts against AMR. The meeting focused on implementing the State Action Plan on AMR, aiming to enhance awareness and promote responsible antimicrobial use in agriculture and animal husbandry.
- February 2025: On February 4, 2025, FAO, in collaboration with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, conducted a workshop in New Delhi to explore the nutraceutical and therapeutic potential of camel milk. The workshop brought together government officials, scientists, and policymakers to discuss strategies for promoting camel milk as a health-enhancing food product.
- **FAO-India Collaboration:** India continues to collaborate with the FAO on various

- initiatives aimed at improving agricultural productivity, food security, and rural development.
- **Commemoration of World Food Day:** India actively participates in World Food Day events, promoting awareness and actions to tackle hunger and ensure food security.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** The FAO's comprehensive mandate covers agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and nutrition, making it distinct among international organizations.
- **Similar Organizations:** While organizations like the World Food (WFP) focus on Programme food assistance, the FAO emphasizes sustainable agricultural development and policy guidance.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The FAO's initiatives. reports, and collaborations have been topics in UPSC examinations, especially concerning food security and agricultural development.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Establishment: Founded in 1945 as a specialized UN agency.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in Rome, Italy.
 - » Membership: Comprises 195 members, including 194 countries and the European Union.
 - » Mandate: Focuses on defeating hunger, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

1.1.2.2 ICAO

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, established to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil



aviation.

Name of the Organization

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ICAO is a specialized UN agency that codifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation. It fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth. The organization sets global standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency, and environmental protection. It also serves as a forum for cooperation among its member states.

Year of Formation

1944

Why they formed it?

In 1944, during World Warll, the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention) was signed to promote cooperation and "create and preserve friendship and understanding among the nations and peoples of the world." This led to the establishment of ICAO in 1947 as a specialized UN agency to oversee and encourage the development of international civil aviation.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Members

- Number of Members: 193
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to all states that have ratified the Chicago Convention.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Any sovereign state that adheres to the Chicago Convention can become a member.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: ICAO's** membership encompasses almost all UN member states, facilitating comprehensive global aviation standards.

India's Membership

• Yes - India is a founding member (it attended the 1944 Chicago Conference) and has been on ICAO's Council since its inception.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

ICAO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Standardization: Developing international Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) for aviation safety, security, efficiency, and environmental protection.
- Regulation: Overseeing the implementation of SARPs by member states to ensure global aviation system harmonization.
- **Coordination:** Serving as a global forum for member states to collaborate on aviation issues.
- Capacity Building: Providing assistance and capacity-building initiatives enhance aviation infrastructure and services in developing countries.

Recent Activities

- Sustainability Initiatives: In December 2024, ICAO established a global platform to secure financing for aviation sustainability projects, aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Adoption of New Standards: In April 2024, ICAO adopted new Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) to enhance safety and accelerate the integration of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) into global airspace.



 80th Anniversary Commemoration: In December 2024, ICAO marked its 80th anniversary, addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change and increasing air traffic, especially in developing regions.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Aviation Summit 2025: In February 2025, ICAO hosted a summit that secured major commitments for sustainable air transport development, focusing on environmental sustainability and capacity building.
- Human Trafficking Advocacy: In February 2025, the ICAO Council President joined global leaders, including Pope Francis, in advocating against human trafficking, emphasizing aviation's role in combating this issue.

India-Specific Developments

- **September 2024:** In September 2024, India hosted the Second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in New Delhi. The conference culminated in the adoption of the "Delhi Declaration," where 29 countries committed to:
 - » Sustainable Aviation: Accelerating efforts to reduce a viation's environmental impact.
 - » Gender Equality: Promoting gender equality across all levels of the aviation sector. Notably, India leads with 15% of its pilots being women, triple the global average.
 - » Safety and Infrastructure: Supporting the implementation of ICAO's global plans for safety, air navigation, and aviation security, and investing in infrastructure to support sustainable growth.
- December 2023: In December 2023, India announced its decision to participate in ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the Long-Term

- Aspirational Goal (LTAG) for reducing aviation emissions, starting from 2027. This move signifies India's dedication to mitigating the environmental impact of international aviation and aligning with global sustainability efforts.
- Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference: In September 2024, India hosted the Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in New Delhi, where 29 countries committed to decarbonizing aviation and enhancing regional cooperation.
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Initiatives: India has been actively investing in the development and deployment of SAF to meet its aviation decarbonization goals, aligning with ICAO's global sustainability objectives.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: As a UN specialized agency, ICAO has the unique authority to establish global aviation standards, ensuring uniformity across international air transport.
- **Similar Organizations:** While organizations like the International Air Transport Association (IATA) represent airlines and focus on commercial aspects, ICAO's mandate encompasses regulatory and safety oversight at the governmental level.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Topics related to ICAO have appeared in UPSC examinations, particularly concerning international organizations and aviation safety standards.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Establishment: Formed in 1944 under the Chicago Convention; became a UN specialized agency in 1947.
 - » Headquarters: Located in Montreal, Canada.
 - » **Membership:** Consists of 193 member







states.

» Mandate: Focuses on setting global aviation standards and promoting safe, efficient, and sustainable air transport.

1.1.2.3 IFAD

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to eradicating rural poverty and hunger in developing countries.

Name of the Organization

Agricultural International Fund for Development (IFAD)

What it is (Nature and Function)

IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized UN agency that focuses exclusively on transforming agriculture, rural economies, and food systems. It provides low-interest loans and grants to developing countries to finance innovative agricultural and rural development programs. The organization aims to empower rural people to increase their food security, improve nutrition, and raise their incomes.

Year of Formation

1977

Why they formed it?

In the early 1970s, global food shortages led to widespread famine, particularly in the Sahel region of Africa. The 1974 World Food Conference highlighted the necessity for an international financial institution dedicated to addressing the root causes of food insecurity and rural poverty. As a result, IFAD was established in 1977 to mobilize resources for agricultural development in developing countries.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Rome, Italy

Members

Number of Members: 180

- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any state that is a member of the United Nations or its specialized agencies, or the International Atomic Energy Agency. Members are categorized into three lists:
 - » **List A:** Primarily developed countries that contribute to IFAD's financial resources.
 - » **List B:** Primarily developing countries that are members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
 - » List C: Developing countries, further divided into:

□ **C1:** Africa

C2: Europe, Asia, and the Pacific

□ **C3:** Latin America and the Carib bean

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership voluntary and open to all eligible states committed to IFAD's mission of eradicating rural poverty.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: IFAD's diverse membership includes a wide range of countries from different economic backgrounds, fostering a collaborative approach to rural development.

India's Membership

Yes – India is a founding member of IFAD (established 1977) and is both a major beneficiary and contributor.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

IFAD's primary objectives and areas of



work include:

- **Poverty Reduction:** Investing in rural areas to alleviate poverty and hunger.
- Agricultural Development: Financing projects that enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability.
- **Empowerment:** Supporting marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, women, and indigenous peoples, to improve their livelihoods.
- Climate Resilience: Assisting rural communities in adapting to climate change and managing natural resources sustainably.

Recent Activities

- Climate Adaptation Initiatives: In 2024, IFAD emphasized the need for increased climate finance to support small-scale farmers, highlighting that they receive less than 1% of global climate finance despite being crucial for global food security.
- Global Hunger Reports: IFAD been actively involved in reporting and addressing the "shamefully" high global hunger levels, with projections indicating that nearly 600 million people could be undernourished by 2030.

Recent News & Initiatives

- COP29 Advocacy: During the 2024 COP29 conference, IFAD called for substantial increases in climate adaptation finance for small-scale farmers, proposing an additional \$75 billion annually to help them adapt to climate change and ensure global food security.
- **Projections:** Hunger In mid-2024, IFAD reported that Africa is expected to overtake Asia with the highest number of hungry people by 2030, emphasizing the urgent need for transformative actions in agricultural practices and rural development.

India-Specific Developments

- April 2022: In April 2022, India reinforced its commitment to combating rural hunger and poverty by providing a US\$20 million loan to IFAD. This financial support aims to enhance food systems, ensuring they offer sustainable and resilient livelihoods for small-scale farmers in some of the world's poorest regions.
- June 2024: In June 2024, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated US\$217.2 million programme partnership with IFAD. The initiative focuses on transforming agriculture, increasing incomes, and improving the livelihoods of rural communities in Jammu and Kashmir.
- January 2025: In January 2025, Donal Brown, IFAD's Associate Vice-President for the Department of Country Operations, concluded a four-day visit to India. During his stay, he engaged with authorities, visited successful IFAD-supported projects, and reinforced the Fund's commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural growth in the country.
- February 2025: In February 2025, IFAD published the interim mid-term review report for the Nav Tejaswini project. This initiative aims to empower rural women by providing access to finance, encouraging entrepreneurship, and offering specific training to enhance their livelihoods.
- Collaborative Projects: IFAD continues to partner with the Indian government on various projects aimed at improving rural livelihoods, enhancing agricultural productivity, and promoting sustainable practices.
- Climate Resilience Efforts: Recent initiatives focus on building climate resilience among smallholder farmers in India, providing them with resources and training to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: Unlike other international

financial institutions, IFAD exclusively targets rural poverty and hunger, with a specialized focus on smallholder agriculture and rural development.

Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization address broader aspects of development and agriculture, IFAD's niche is its concentrated effort on empowering rural communities through financial investments and tailored programs.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Topics related to IFAD have appeared in UPSC examinations, concerning particularly international organizations, rural development, and agricultural finance.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Establishment: Founded in 1977 as a specialized UN agency.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in Rome, Italy.

1.1.2.4 International Labour **Organization (ILO)**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights.

Name of the Organization

• International Labour Organization (ILO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The ILO is a United Nations agency that sets international labor standards and promotes rights at work. It brings together governments, employers, and workers to develop policies and programs aimed at ensuring decent work conditions, enhancing social protection, and strengthening dialogue on work-related issues.

Year of Formation

1919

Why they formed it?

Established in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles, the ILO was created in response to the social unrest and labor issues that emerged during the Industrial Revolution and were exacerbated by World War I. Its founders recognized that universal and lasting peace could only be achieved through social justice.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 187 member states
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to any state that is a member of the United Nations.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** Membership is voluntary and open to all UN member states committed to upholding the ILO's principles.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: The ILO includes a diverse range of member states, encompassing nearly all UN members, which allows for comprehensive in labor standards representation discussions.

India's Membership

Yes - India was a founding member in 1919. (Even before independence, India (then under British rule) helped found the ILO and has remained a member.)



What it Does (Key Objectives)

The ILO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Setting International Labor Standards: Developing conventions and recommendations to guide national policies and legislation.
- Promoting Rights at Work: Advocating for the elimination of forced labor, child labor, discrimination, and upholding freedom of association.
- **Enhancing Social Protection:** Ensuring access to adequate social security systems and safe working conditions.
- Strengthening Social Dialogue: Facilitating discussions among governments, employers, and workers to address labor issues collaboratively.

Recent Activities

- Global Commission on the Future of Work: In 2019, the ILO convened a commission that produced a report with recommendations to address challenges in the evolving labor market, including technological advancements and demographic shifts.
- COVID-19 Response: The ILO has been actively involved in assessing the pandemic's impact on employment and providing guidance for recovery, emphasizing the need for inclusive and sustainable solutions.

Recent News & Initiatives

- World Employment Report and Social Outlook Report: The ILO regularly publishes reports analyzing global employment trends, offering insights into issues like unemployment rates, wage disparities, and the informal economy.
- Campaigns Against Child Labor: Ongoing initiatives aim to eliminate child labor by 2025, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.

India-Specific Developments

- April 2024: In April 2024, the Indian government formally objected to an ILO report titled "India Employment Report 2024," which claimed that 83% of the unemployed population in India were youth. The Ministry of Labour and Employment highlighted inconsistencies in the data sets used and argued that the report misinterpreted youth employment figures, overlooking factors such as international mobility and the gige conomy. The government emphasized that the data sets compared were not comparable, leading to potential misrepresentation of the employment scenario.
- September 2024: In September 2024, the ILO and India's Central Trade Unions convened a consultation titled "Towards an Inclusive Labour Agenda for India." The event, held in New Delhi, brought together over 30 participants from 11 Central Trade Unions and various ILO departments. The discussions focused on addressing evolving challenges in India's workforce, aiming to develop a collaborative plan to promote decent work and inclusive growth.
- December 2024: In December 2024, the ILO launched the "RISE for Impact" project in Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh. This initiative aims to promote decent work in India's cotton supply chain by integrating Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The project collaborates with local farmers to enhance working conditions and ensure sustainable practices within the industry.
- Collaborative Programs: The ILO has partnered with the Indian government on projects focusing on improving labor conditions, promoting decent work, and enhancing social protection for workers in various sectors.
- Skill Development Initiatives: Efforts have been made to support skill development and vocational training programs in India to boost employment



opportunities, especially for youth and women.

Comparison with other Orgs

 Unique Aspects: The ILO's tripartite structure, which includes governments, employers, and workers, is unique among UN agencies, ensuring that all stakeholders have an equal voice in decision-making.

 Similar Organizations: While other UN agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO) focus on health or UNESCO on education and culture, the ILO is singularly dedicated to labor issues, setting it apart in its specialized mandate.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The ILO has been a topic in UPSC examinations, with questions focusing on its functions, conventions, and India's role within the organization.
- Key Facts to Remember:
- Establishment: Founded in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Headquarters: Located in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - » Membership: Comprises 187 member states.
 - » Unique Structure: Operates on a tripartite system, incorporating representatives from governments, employers, and workers.
 - » Core Conventions: Focus on eliminating forced labor, child labor, discrimination, and promoting freedom of association.

Understanding the ILO's role and functions is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in shaping labor laws and standards both globally and within India.

1.1.2.5 International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping.

Name of the Organization

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The IMO is the global standard-setting authority for the safety, security, and environmental performance of international shipping. Its primary role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is fair, effective, universally adopted, and universally implemented.

Year of Formation

 The IMO was established in 1948 through a convention adopted by the United Nations, and it came into force in 1958.

Why they formed it?

Prior to the IMO's establishment, there was no single international body responsible for maritime safety and environmental standards. The rapid growth of international trade via sea routes highlighted the need for a unified regulatory framework to ensure maritime safety, prevent marine pollution, and facilitate fair trade practices. This led to the creation of the IMO to address these challenges collectively.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• London, United Kingdom

Members

- **Number of Members:** 175 Member States and three Associate Members.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership

is open to all sovereign states that are members of the United Nations.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** Membership voluntary and open to all UN member states committed to upholding the IMO's conventions and regulations.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** The IMO's comprehensive membership ensures wide representation, facilitating the adoption and implementation of international maritime standards globally.

India's Membership

Yes – India joined IMO in 1959 and is one of its earliest members. (India has continuously served on the IMO Council, Category B, for most years since the IMO began operations.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The IMO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Maritime Safety: Developing maintaining a comprehensive regulatory framework for shipping, including safety standards for ship design, construction, equipment, and operation.
- **Environmental Protection:** Implementing measures to prevent and control pollution from ships, such as oil spills, ballast water discharge, and air emissions.
- **Legal Matters:** Addressing legal issues related to international shipping, including liability and compensation, piracy, and maritime security.
- **Technical Cooperation: Providing** technical assistance and capacity-building to member states, especially developing countries, to implement IMO conventions effectively.
- **Security:** Maritime Enhancing security of ships and port facilities to prevent incidents like terrorism and armed robbery at sea.

Recent Activities

- **Decarbonization Initiatives:** In July 2023, the IMO adopted a revised strategy aiming for a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 80% by 2040, with the ultimate goal of achieving net-zero emissions by or around 2050.
- Addressing Unregulated **Shipping:** In December 2023, the IMO adopted a resolution targeting "dark fleet" tankers engaged in illegal and unsafe activities, urging member states to enforce measures against such operations.
- **Leadership Changes:** Arsenio Dominguez assumed office as the 10th Secretary-General of the IMO on January 1, 2024, for an initial four-year term.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Regional Presence **Expansion:** January 2025, the IMO launched a Regional Presence Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in Alexandria, Egypt, to coordinate technical assistance in maritime safety, security, and environmental sustainability.
- **Environmental Reports:** A new IMO CARES report released in February 2025 highlighted key actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from domestic shipping in Africa and the Caribbean.

India-Specific Developments

December 2023: In December 2023, India was re-elected to the IMO Council under Category B, which comprises 10 states with the largest interest in international seaborne trade. This re-election, for the 2024–2025 biennium, reflects India's sustained commitment to international maritime operations. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, highlighted that the highest vote tally achieved by India indicates the government's determination to strengthen its contributions to global maritime activities.

- **December 2023:** Also in December 2023. India was chosen as a pioneer lead country for the IMO's GreenVoyage2050 Project. This initiative aims to assist developing nations in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships, underscoring India's proactive role in promoting environmentally sustainable maritime practices.
- **April 2024:** In April 2024, the Directorate General of Shipping intensified efforts to enhance India's strategic engagement with the IMO. This initiative focuses ensuring maritime safety aligning India's maritime policies with international standards, reflecting the country's commitment to global maritime governance.
- October 2024: By October 2024, during the 132nd IMO Council session in London, India assumed a leading role in global maritime discussions. This active participation highlights India's dedication to addressing critical maritime issues and contributing to the formulation of international maritime policies.
- **Maritime Safety Collaboration:** India has been actively collaborating with the IMO to enhance maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean region, participating in various IMO-led initiatives and workshops.
- **Environmental Commitments:** India has committed to implementing IMO's environmental regulations, those related to reducing sulfur emissions from ships and adopting cleaner fuel alternatives.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: The IMO is the only specialized UN agency exclusively dedicated to maritime affairs, providing a globalforumforregulatoryframeworksthat ensure safe, secure, and environmentally sound shipping.
- **Similar Organizations:** While organizations like the International

Labour Organization (ILO) address labor standards, including those for seafarers, the IMO specifically focuses on the broader aspects of maritime operations, safety, and environmental protection.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The IMO has been featured in UPSC examinations, particularly concerning its role in maritime safety, environmental regulations, and India's participation in international maritime affairs.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » **Establishment:** Formed in 1948; came into force in 1958.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in London, United Kingdom.
 - » **Membership:** Consists of 175 Member States and three Associate Members.
 - » Primary **Functions:** Sets global standards in the maritime domain and global shipping industry.

1.1.2.6 International Monetary **Fund (IMF)**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a global organization dedicated to promoting international monetary cooperation and financial stability.

Name of the Organization

• International Monetary Fund (IMF)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The IMF is an international financial institution that aims to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty worldwide. It provides policy advice, financial assistance, and technical expertise to its member countries.



Year of Formation

1944

Why they formed it?

The IMF was established in the aftermath of World War II during the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. The devastation caused by the war underscored the need for a cooperative international monetary system to prevent economic crises and promote stability. The IMF was created to oversee this system, provide a forum for consultation and collaboration on international monetary issues, and offer financial assistance to countries facing balance of payments problems.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Washington, D.C., United States

Members

- Number of Members: 191 member countries
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any country that conducts foreign policy and is willing to adhere to the IMF's statutes and regulations.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Countries apply for membership and, upon approval by the existing members, are required to pay a quota subscription, which determines their financial commitment, voting power, and access to IMF resources.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: The IMF includes almost all sovereign nations. Notably, Taiwan is not a member due to political reasons, primarily objections from China.

India's Membership

Yes – India joined the IMF on 27 December 1945 as a founding member.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The IMF's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- **Surveillance:** Monitoring global economic and financial developments and providing policy advice to member countries.
- Financial Assistance: Providing loans to member countries facing balance of payments problems to help stabilize their economies.
- Capacity **Development:** Offering technical assistance and training to help member countries strengthen capacity to design and implement effective policies.

Recent Activities

- **COVID-19 Response:** The IMF provided financial assistance to nearly 100 countries during the pandemic, including a \$650 billion allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to boost global liquidity.
- **Debt Relief Initiatives:** Extended debt service relief to 25 low-income countries to help them manage the economic impact of the pandemic.
- Climate Change Focus: Established the Resilience and Sustainability Trust to support countries in addressing climaterelated challenges.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Economic Outlook: The IMF projects global growth at 3.3% for both 2025 and 2026, with inflation expected to decrease from 5.7% in 2024 to 3.5% in 2026.
- **Debt Concerns:** Warned that global government debt could surpass the world's annual economic output by the end of the decade, urging countries to

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implement spending cuts and tax hikes to stabilize debt levels.

initiatives, particularly in areas like fiscal management and monetary policy.

India-Specific Developments

- December 2023: On December 18. 2023, the IMF Executive Board concluded its Article IV consultation with India. The report highlighted India's robust economic growth over the past year, with employment surpassing pre-pandemic levels and a resilient financial sector. However, it also noted that headline inflation remained volatile and public debt elevated, emphasizing the need for fiscal buffer rebuilding. The consultation underscored India's significant role in advancing multilateral policy priorities during its G20 presidency.
- October 2024: In October 2024, the IMF maintained its growth projection for India at 6.5% for both FY2025-26 and FY2026-27. This decision was based on a sharper-thanexpected deceleration in industrial activity, leading to a more cautious outlook. Despite this, India was projected to remain one of the fastest-growing major economies, with the services sector expected to sustain expansion and manufacturing activity anticipated to strengthen, supported by government initiatives to enhance logistics infrastructure and improve the business environment through tax reforms.
- **November 2024:** Effective November 1, 2024, Krishnamurthy Subramanian, former Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India, assumed the role of India's Executive Director at the IMF. His appointment reflects India's commitment to active participation in the IMF's decisionmaking processes and to contributing to global economic stability.
- **Economic Assessments:** The IMF has consistently engaged with India, providing economic assessments and recommendations to support sustainable growth and financial stability.
- Technical Assistance: Collaborated with Indianauthorities on capacity development

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: The IMF focuses on macroeconomic and financial stability, providing short- to medium-term financial assistance and policy advice.
- Similar Organizations: The World Bank, while also a Bretton Woods institution, concentrates on long-term economic development and poverty reduction through project-based funding.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions: The IMF has been featured in UPSC examinations, with questions focusing on its functions, roles during economic crises, and differences from the World Bank.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** Founded in 1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference.
- » **Headquarters:** Located in Washington, D.C., USA.
- » **Membership:** Comprises 191 member countries.
- » Primary **Functions:** Surveillance, financial assistance, and capacity development.
- » Recent Initiatives: COVID-19 financial support, focus on debt sustainability, and climate change-related funding mechanisms.

Understanding the IMF's role is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in shaping global economic policies and providing financial stability, directly impacting member countries like India.

1.1.2.7 International **Telecommunication Union**

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for issues related to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Name of the Organization

• International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The ITU is the UN's specialized agency for ICTs, coordinating global telecommunications operations and services. Its primary functions include allocating global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, developing technical standards to ensure network interconnectivity, and striving to improve access to ICTs worldwide.

Year of Formation

1865

Why they formed it?

Established as the International Telegraph Union in 1865, the ITU was created to standardize and regulate international telegraphy. As communication technologies evolved, its mandate expanded to encompass telephony, radio, and eventually modern ICTs, ensuring seamless global communication and cooperation.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 194 Member States and over 1,000 sector members, including companies, universities, and international and regional organizations.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all sovereign states. Sector

membership is available to organizations and entities with an interest in ICTs.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** Member States join voluntarily, while sector members are admitted based on their involvement and interest in ICT development and standardization.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: The ITU's broad membership includes almost all UN member states, facilitating comprehensive international cooperation in telecommunications.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India has been an active member since 1869 (one of the oldest affiliations, dating back to the International Telegraph Union era).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The ITU's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Radiocommunication (ITU-R): Managing the international radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbit resources.
- Standardization (ITU-T): Developing global standards for telecommunications and ICTs to ensure network interoperability.
- **Development** (ITU-D): Promoting equitable access to ICTs and bridging the digital divide through capacity-building initiatives.

Recent Activities

- Strategic Plan Adoption: In 2022, the ITU's Plenipotentiary Conference adopted the strategic and budget plans for 2024-2027, outlining priorities in radiocommunication, standardization, and development to drive inclusive global digital transformation.
- Submarine Cable Protection: In December 2024, the ITU established the International Advisory Body for Submarine Cable Resilience to enhance



the protection and resilience of submarine communication cables, which are vital for global data transmission.

Recent News & Initiatives

- 160th Anniversary: The ITU is set to celebrate its 160th anniversary on May 17, 2025, marking a century and a half of contributions to global communications.
- Al for Good Global Summit: Scheduled for July 8-11, 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland, this summit aims to explore the potential of artificial intelligence in addressing global challenges.

India-Specific Developments

- October 2024: From October 15 to 24, 2024, New Delhi hosted the ITU's World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly. This landmark event brought together over 3,000 delegates from more than 190 countries to discuss and define global standards for emerging technologies, including 6G, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the assembly, highlighting India's pivotal role in shaping the future of global telecommunications.
- March 2024: In March 2024, Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary of the Department of Telecommunications, was unanimously elected as co-chair of the ITU's Digital Innovation Board. This board, comprising ministers and vice ministers from 23 member countries, provides strategic guidance to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in digital development. India's leadership in this board underscores its commitment to leveraging innovation for socio-economic development.
- February 2025: In February 2025, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and ITU partnered to develop Aldriven digital twins. This collaboration aims to enhance urban planning and infrastructure development by creating virtual replicas of physical assets, thereby

- improving efficiency and sustainability in urban management.
- Hosting WTSA-24: India is set to host the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) from October 15 to 24, 2024, in New Delhi. This significant event will shape the future of ICT standardization globally.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: As the oldest UN specialized agency, the ITU has a unique mandate encompassing the global management of radio-frequency spectrum, satellite orbits, and the development of technical standards, ensuring worldwide ICT interoperability.
- **Similar Organizations:** While organizations like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) also develop global standards, the ITU specifically focuses on telecommunications and ICTs, playing a pivotal role in global communications infrastructure.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The ITU has been featured in UPSC examinations, particularly concerning its role in global telecommunication standards and India's involvement in ITU activities.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Establishment: Founded in 1865, making it the oldest UN specialized agency.
 - » Headquarters: Located in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - » Membership: Comprises 194 Member States and over 1,000 sector members.
 - » Primary Functions: Manages global radio-frequency spectrum, develops telecommunication standards, and promotes ICT development.
 - » Recent Initiatives: Focus on submarine cable resilience and upcoming 160th



anniversary celebrations.

Understanding the ITU's role is crucial for exams, as it significantly influences global ICT policies and standards, directly impacting technological development and international cooperation.

1.1.2.8 UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientificand Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting international collaboration in education, science, culture, and communication.

Name of the Organization

 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNESCO aims to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and communication. It serves as a laboratory of ideas, setting standards, fostering knowledge sharing, and promoting the free flow of ideas to enhance mutual understanding and respect for our planet.

Year of Formation

1945

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a pressing need to rebuild educational systems, promote cultural understanding, and foster scientific collaboration to prevent future conflicts. UNESCO was established to coordinate international efforts in these areas, aiming to strengthen the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Paris, France

Members

- Number of Members: 193 Member States and 11 Associate Members
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all member states of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Countries become members through a formal process involving acceptance of UNESCO's constitution and commitment to its objectives.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: UNESCO's membership encompasses a vast majority of the world's sovereign states, facilitating widespread international collaboration.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India is a founder member (joined 4 November 1946) and has continuously participated in UNESCO's programs.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNESCO's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Education:** Promoting quality education for all and lifelong learning.
- **Natural Sciences:** Advancing scientific research and environmental sustainability.
- **Social and Human Sciences:** Fostering social inclusion and ethical standards.
- **Culture:** Protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural diversity.
- Communication and Information: Encouraging freedom of expression and universal access to information.

Recent Activities



- World Heritage Committee Session: In July 2024, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee convened in New Delhi, India, where significant decisions were made, including the removal of Senegal's Niokolo-Koba National Park from the List of World Heritage in Danger due to improved conservation efforts.
- State of the Education Report for India 2024: UNESCO launched "Rhythms of **Learning,"** focusing on the integration of culture and arts in education to foster holistic learning and promote cultural diversity.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **World Crafts Forum:** UNESCO, collaboration with the World Crafts Council and India's Ministry of Textiles, organized a forum to showcase global traditional crafts and artisanship, highlighting the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage.
- **Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural** Property: A regional workshop was held to address the illicit trafficking of cultural property in South Asia, emphasizing the need for strengthened legal frameworks and international cooperation.

India-Specific Developments

- August 2022: In August 2022, the Heartfulness Institute, in partnership with UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), fourth organized the International Youth Summit themed "Rising with Kindness." Held at Kanha Shanti Vanam, the event attracted approximately 12,000 including students and participants, academics, focusing on personal growth, societal development, and environmental awareness through practices like yoga and meditation.
- December 2023: In December 2023. UNESCO announced the winners of the

- Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. India received multiple accolades:
- » Award of Excellence: Rambagh Gates and Ramparts, Punjab.
- » Award of **Distinction:** Karnikara Mandapam, Kunnamangalam Bhagawati Temple, Kerala.
- » Award of Merit: Church of Epiphany, Haryana; David Sassoon Library and Reading Room, Mumbai; Bikaner House, New Delhi.
- » Special Recognition for Sustainable **Development:** Karnikara Mandapam, Kunnamangalam Bhagawati Temple, Kerala; Pipal Haveli, Punjab.
- July 2024: In July 2024, New Delhi hosted the 46th session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. The committee inscribed 26 new cultural and natural properties on the World Heritage List, bringing the total to 1,223 sites worldwide. The session concluded with Nauru ratifying the World Heritage Convention, becoming its 196th State Party.
- December 2024: In December 2024, UNESCO's Regional Office for South Asia released the sixth edition of its annual flagship report, "Rhythms of Learning: The 2024 State of the Education Report for India," focusing on culture and arts education. The report emphasizes the importance of integrating cultural and artistic elements into India's education system to foster creativity, inclusivity, and sustainable development.
- February 2025: In February 2025, the Indian government submitted a proposal to UNESCO to include the Diwali festival in the 2025 list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced that UNESCO is expected to examine the proposal within the year.
- Al and the Rule of Law Workshop: UNESCO partnered with India's National

Law University to conduct a workshop aimed at strengthening South Asia's judiciary through discussions on artificial intelligence and its implications for the rule of law.

• 43rd World Heritage Site: In 2023, India celebrated the inscription of its 43rd UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognizing the country's rich cultural and natural heritage.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UNESCO distinguishes itself by its multidisciplinary approach, integrating education, science, culture, and communication to promote peace and sustainable development.
- Similar Organizations: While other UN agencies focus on specific sectors (e.g., WHO on health, FAO on food and agriculture), UNESCO's broad mandate allows it to address complex, interconnected global challenges through a holistic lens.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Ouestions: Examinations have featured questions on UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, its role in promoting education and culture, and India's involvement in UNESCO initiatives.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Establishment: Founded in 1945 to promote international collaboration in education, science, and culture.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in Paris, France.
 - » **Membership:** Comprises 193 Member States and 11 Associate Members.
 - » Primary **Functions:** Focuses on education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication.
 - » Recent Initiatives: **Emphasis** integrating culture and arts in education, safeguarding cultural heritage, and promoting ethical AI practices.

Understanding UNESCO's multifaceted role is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in shaping global policies related to education, culture, and sustainable development, directly impacting nations like India.

1.1.2.9 UNIDO

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID).

Name of the Organization

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNIDO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with a unique mandate to promote, dynamize, and accelerate industrial development. Its mission is to promote and accelerate the industrialization of developing countries.

Year of Formation

1966

Why they formed it?

Established on 17 November 1966, UNIDO was created to promote and accelerate the developing industrialization of countries. Its mission is to promote and accelerate the industrialization of developing countries.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Vienna, Austria

Members



- Number of Members: As of 2025, UNIDO comprises 170 Member States.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any sovereign state that is a member of the United Nations or its specialized agencies.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Countries voluntarily join UNIDO to collaborate on industrial development initiatives.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** UNIDO's membership includes a diverse range of countries from different economic backgrounds, fostering comprehensive international cooperation in industrial development.

India's Membership

Yes – India has been a member since UNIDO's creation (founding member in 1966) and sits on its policymaking organs.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNIDO's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Creating Shared Prosperity: Focusing on agro-industries, women's participation, and post-crisis human security.
- Advancing Economic Competitiveness: Supporting investment promotion, SME development, and trade capacity building.
- Safeguarding the Environment: Assisting countries in environmental management and sustainable energy initiatives.
- Strengthening Knowledge and **Institutions:** Enhancing institutional capacities and knowledge for sustainable industrial development.

Recent Activities

AIM Global Forum: In December 2024, UNIDO hosted the inaugural AIM Global Forum in Vienna, focusing on artificial intelligence's role in industry

manufacturing.

- COP29 Participation: In November 2024, UNIDO participated in COP29 in Baku, organizing sessions on green digital transformation and sustainable industrial practices.
- Sustainable Industrial Park Platform **Launch:** In June 2022, UNIDO launched the beta version of its Sustainable Industrial Park Platform, a global resource center for industrial parks.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Chemical Leasing Award Ceremony:** Scheduled for March 13, 2025, UNIDO will co-host the 6th Chemical Leasing Award Ceremony in Vienna and online, recognizing innovative practices chemical leasing.
- \$28 Million Project Funding: UNIDO secured \$28 million in project funding to deliver climate solutions and protect the ozonelayer, demonstrating its commitment to environmental sustainability.

India-Specific Developments

- April 2023: In April 2023, the Ministry of Textiles, in partnership with UNIDO, organized a workshop focusing on sustainability, innovation, and inclusion within the PM MITRA textile and apparel parks. The event aimed to share best practices to enhance the competitiveness and environmental performance of India's textile sector.
- June 2023: On June 27, 2023, UNIDO commemorated World Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day by sharing insights on strategies to boost MSME performance. The discussions emphasized the critical role of MSMEs in achieving inclusive and sustainable industrial development in India.
- September 2024: In September 2024, during the Energy Efficiency Summit organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), UNIDO showcased



18 innovative climate-tech solutions developed under its Facility for Low Carbon Technology Deployment (FLCTD) project. These solutions, validated through rigorous field trials, aim to support India's climate and net-zero development goals.

- August 2024: In August 2024, UNIDO, in collaboration with partners, launched a USD 7 million regional project between India and the Philippines to promote ecofriendly agriculture. The initiative seeks to reduce the use of harmful persistent organic pollutants and highly hazardous pesticides by promoting bio-pesticides and organic farming practices.
- UNIDO-India Cooperation Publication:
 UNIDO released a publication detailing its cooperation with India, highlighting joint efforts in industrial development and technology transfer.
- Agro-Value Chain Development: UNIDO has been actively promoting sustainable agribusiness and agro-value chain development in India, aiming to create inclusive business opportunities for the rural poor.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNIDO is the only UN specialized agency with an exclusive mandate to promote industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization, and environmental sustainability.
- Similar Organizations: While organizations like the World Bank and UNDP also engage in development activities, UNIDO specifically focuses on industrial development, offering specialized expertise in this sector.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:** Questions have been asked regarding UNIDO's role in sustainable industrial development and its initiatives in developing countries.
- Key Facts to Remember:

- » Establishment: Founded in 1966 to promote industrialization in developing countries.
- » Headquarters: Located in Vienna, Austria.
- » Membership: Consists of 170 Member States.
- » Primary Functions: Focuses on creating shared prosperity, advancing economic competitiveness, safeguarding the environment, and strengthening knowledge and institutions.
- » Recent Initiatives: Emphasis on AI in industry, sustainable industrial parks, and chemical leasing practices.

Understanding UNIDO's role is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in shaping global industrial policies, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering international cooperation in industrial development.

1.1.2.10 Universal Postal Union (UPU)

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that coordinates international postal policies and services among member nations, ensuring a seamless global postal network.

Name of the Organization

• Universal Postal Union (UPU)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The UPU serves as the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players, facilitating the exchange of international mail and the development of worldwide postal services. It establishes rules for international mail exchanges and makes recommendations to stimulate growth in mail, parcel, and financial services volumes, while improving quality of service for customers.

Year of Formation





Why they formed it?

Before the UPU's establishment, international mail exchange was governed by numerous bilateral agreements, leading to a complex and inefficient system. The Treaty of Bern, signed on October 9, 1874, created the General Postal Union (later renamed the Universal Postal Union), unifying disparate postal services and regulations to facilitate free and reliable international mail exchange.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Bern, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 192 member countries
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any sovereign state. Non-UN member states may also join if their request is approved by two-thirds of the UPU member countries.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Countries join the UPU to participate in the global postal system, adhering to its conventions and agreements to ensure efficient international mail exchange.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** All United Nations member states are part of the UPU, with the exception of Andorra, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, which have their mail routed through other member countries.

India's Membership

Yes – India became the first Asian country to join the UPU in 1876, and it remains a

member, coordinating international mail services.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The UPU's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Coordination of International Mail **Exchange:** Establishing standardized procedures and rates for cross-border mail.
- of Postal Development **Services:** Enhancing and modernizing postal services to meet evolving customer needs.
- **Technical Assistance:** Providing support and expertise to developing countries to improve their postal infrastructure.
- Policy and Regulation: Formulating international postal policies and regulations to ensure efficient and secure mail services.

Recent Activities

- Extraordinary **Congress** 2019: response to challenges in international mail remuneration rates, the UPU convened an Extraordinary Congress in 2019, leading to reforms in terminal dues and agreements on self-declared rates for certain countries.
- **Digital Transformation Initiatives:** The UPU has been promoting the integration of digital technologies in postal services, including the development of e-commerce solutions and electronic payment systems enhance service efficiency and accessibility.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Postal Strategy: The UPU has been implementing its 2021-2025 strategy focusing on innovation, integration, and inclusion, aiming to modernize postal services and expand their role in the digital economy.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The organization is actively aligning its programs with the UN's SDGs, particularly in promoting decent work, economic



growth, industry innovation, infrastructure development.

India-Specific Developments

- May 2023: In May 2023, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the establishment of a UPU Regional Office in New Delhi. This strategic move aims to enhance India's role in multilateral postal cooperation, focusing building, technological capacity advancement, and improving postal services in the Asia-Pacific region. India providing committed to necessary infrastructure and personnel for the office.
- July 2023: On July 19, 2023, Minister of State for Communications, Shri Devusinh Chauhan, and UPU Director General, Mr. Masahiko Metoki, inaugurated the UPU Regional Office in New Delhi. This office serves as a hub for technical assistance and development cooperation in South Asia, facilitating the exchange of expertise and promoting the modernization of postal services. During the inauguration, India announced a contribution of USD 200,000 over four years to support UPU's development and technical assistance activities in the region.
- December 2023: In December 2023. the Indian Parliament enacted the Post Office Act, 2023, replacing the Indian Post Office Act of 1898. This legislation aims to modernize India's postal services, expanding their scope to include financial services and e-commerce logistics. The Act also grants the central government greater oversight of postal operations and includes provisions for intercepting postal articles under specific circumstances, sparking discussions about privacy and autonomy.
- **E-Commerce Collaboration:** India Post has been collaborating with the UPU to enhance its e-commerce capabilities, facilitating cross-border trade and improving delivery services for small and medium enterprises.
- **Capacity Building:** The UPU has

conducted workshops and training programs for Indian postal employees, focusing on digital skills and modern postal management practices to improve service quality and efficiency.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: As one of the oldest international organizations, the UPU has a unique mandate to coordinate global postal services, ensuring universal access and standardized operations across member countries.
- Similar Organizations: While other organizations like the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) focus on telecommunications, the UPU specifically addresses postal services, playing a crucial role in facilitating global communication and commerce through mail.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have included questions on the functions of the UPU, its role as a UN specialized agency, and its impact on international postal services.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Establishment: Founded in 1874 through the Treaty of Bern.
 - » Headquarters: Located in Bern, Switzerland.
 - » Membership: Comprises 192 member countries.
 - » Primary **Functions:** Coordinates international mail exchange, develops postal services, provides technical assistance, and formulates postal policies.
 - » **Recent Initiatives:** Focus on digital transformation, e-commerce integration, and alignment with Sustainable Development Goals.

Understanding the UPU's role is essential for exams, as it plays a pivotal part in facilitating



global communication, trade, and cooperation through its coordination of international postal services.

1.1.2.11 World Bank Group (WBG)

The World Bank Group (WBG) is a vital international organization committed to reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development worldwide.

Name of the Organization

World Bank Group (WBG)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The WBG is a family of five international organizations that provide leveraged loans, grants, and expertise to developing countries. Its primary mission is to reduce poverty and support development by providing financial and technical assistance for various projects, including infrastructure, education, health, and environmental initiatives.

Year of Formation

• Established on July 4, 1944.

Why they formed it?

The WBG was conceived during the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944. The primary aim was to aid in the reconstruction of countries devastated by World War II and to promote economic development and stability by providing financial assistance and fostering international cooperation.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

1818 H Street Northwest, Washington, D.C., United States.

Members

- Number of Members: 189 member countries.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to any country that subscribes to the WBG's mission and becomes a member of its institutions.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Countries voluntarily the WBG to collaborate development projects and gain access to financial and technical resources.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** The WBG includes a diverse range of countries, from developed to developing nations, fostering global cooperation in development efforts.

India's Membership

Yes – India joined the World Bank (IBRD) in December 1945. (India is a founding member of the IBRD and IDA, and also a member of IFC, MIGA, etc.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The WBG's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Reducing Extreme Poverty: Aiming to decrease the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day.
- **Promoting Shared Prosperity:** Focusing on increasing income growth for the bottom 40% of the population in every country.
- **Development** Financing **Projects:** Providing loans and grants for projects in sectors like education, health, public administration, infrastructure, financial and private sector development, agriculture, and environmental and natural resource management.



Offering Technical Assistance and Policy **Advice:** Helping countries implement effective policies and strategies for sustainable development.

Recent Activities

- Pandemic Fund Initiatives: In December 2024, the WBG announced the third round of funding through the Pandemic Fund, enabling countries to submit proposals starting in March 2025.
- **Record IDA Replenishment:** Also in December 2024, the WBG secured a record \$100 billion replenishment for the International Development Association (IDA), aiming to provide more agile and effective support to the world's poorest countries.
- Climate Finance Achievement: In fiscal year 2024, the WBG reached a record \$42.6 billion in climate finance, reflecting its commitment to addressing climate change challenges.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Debt-for-Education Swap:** In December 2024, the WBG facilitated a debt-foreducation swap with Ivory Coast, allowing the country to repurchase expensive commercial debt and reinvest savings into the education sector.
- Leadership **Changes:** Ajay Banga assumed the presidency of the WBG in June 2023, bringing a renewed focus on integrating climate action into the bank's mission while maintaining its traditional development focus.

India-Specific Developments

October 2024: On October 31, 2024, the World Bank approved a new program to assist 400,000 farmers in Kerala. The initiative aims to help farmers adapt climate change, promote agrientrepreneurs, and leverage at least \$9 million in commercial finance, particularly benefiting women-led enterprises.

- **December 2024:** On December 12, 2024, the World Bank sanctioned a project in Uttar Pradesh designed to boost farmers' incomes. The project focuses on enhancing productivity, adopting digital technologies, implementing climateresilient practices, and strengthening market linkages. Additionally, it seeks to attract \$15 million in private investment to support these efforts.
- January 2025: On January 7, 2025, the World Bank approved a project in Meghalaya aimed at equipping 500,000 adolescents with the skills necessary to transition from school to employment. The initiative focuses on reducing dropout rates, improving learning outcomes, and providing guidance for job access and entrepreneurship.
- **February 2025:** In February 2025, the World Bank announced plans to decentralize its operations by relocating regional vice presidents to overseas hubs. This strategic move aims to enhance the Bank's responsiveness and effectiveness in addressing regional development challenges.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** The WBG has continued to support India's infrastructure development, including financing for transportation and renewable energy projects to promote sustainable growth.
- COVID-19 Response: In response to the pandemic, the WBG provided financial assistance to India for vaccine procurement and strengthening healthcare systems.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** The WBG is distinct in its comprehensive approach, combining financial resources, technical expertise, and policy advice to address development challenges globally.
- **Similar Organizations:** While institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) focus on macroeconomic stability and financial crises, the WBG emphasizes long-



term economic development and poverty reduction through project financing and capacity building.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have featured questions on the structure of the WBG, its constituent institutions, and their roles in global development.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Constituent Institutions: The WBG comprises five institutions: IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA, and ICSID.
- » Mission: Focused on ending extreme promoting shared poverty and prosperity.
- » **Recent Initiatives:** Emphasis on climate finance, pandemic response, innovative financial solutions like debtfor-education swaps.

Understanding the WBG's multifaceted role is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in shaping global economic policies, providing development assistance, and addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change and pandemics.

World Bank Group (WBG) - Meaning

The World Bank Group (WBG) is a global financial institution that provides funding, policy advice, and technical assistance to developing countries to reduce poverty and foster sustainable economic growth. It consists of five institutions, each serving a different role in economic development, private sector investment, and dispute resolution.

Five Arms of WBG and Their Functions

1. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

• Function: Provides loans, guarantees, and technical expertise to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries to support

large-scale infrastructure, social, and economic development projects.

• Key Areas: Infrastructure, healthcare, education. climate adaptation, urban development.

Recent Developments:

- Increased financing for climate resilience and green energy projects.
- Enhanced focus on pandemic recovery and economic stabilization.
- Efforts to expand concessional lending to vulnerable middle-income countries.

• Relevance to India:

- · India has been a major recipient of IBRD loans for roads, metro rail systems, smart cities, and energy projects.
- Supports healthcare initiatives, rural development, and economic reforms.

2. International Development Association (IDA)

- Function: Provides concessional (lowinterest or zero-interest) loans and grants to the world's poorest countries.
- **Key Areas:** Basic infrastructure, social welfare, climate resilience, human capital development.

• Recent Developments:

- · Focus on financing projects in fragile and conflict-affected states.
- Increased support for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Strengthening digital economy infrastructure in low-income countries.

Relevance to India:

- · India was a major recipient but graduated from IDA in 2014.
- Some Indian projects still benefit from transitional support under IDA.

3. International Finance Corporation (IFC)

- **Function:** Provides loans, equity investments, and advisory services to private sector companies in developing countries.
 - Key Areas: Private sector development,



fintech. agribusiness, renewable energy, manufacturing.

• Recent Developments:

- Increased focus on sustainable finance (green bonds, ESG investing).
- Expansion into digital economy projects and fintech.
- Greater emphasis on startups, small businesses, and financial inclusion.

• Relevance to India:

- IFC funds Indian startups, MSMEs, and renewable energy projects.
- Supports agriculture and digital economy initiatives.
- Played a role in funding Indian fintech companies and NBFCs.

4. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

- Function: Provides political risk insurance and credit guarantees to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI) in developing nations.
- **Key Areas:** Infrastructure, power, transport, banking, and risk mitigation.

Recent Developments:

- Focus on fragile and conflict-affected regions.
- Expanding guarantees for green energy investments.
- · Enhanced risk insurance for digital infrastructure projects.

• Relevance to India:

- Helps foreign investors mitigate political risks when investing in Indian sectors.
- Supports FDI in critical infrastructure and energy sectors.

5. International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)

- Function: Resolves investment disputes between governments and foreign investors through arbitration.
- Key Areas: Legal dispute resolution, arbitration, treaty enforcement.

Recent Developments:

- Increase in cases related to renewable energy and digital trade.
- Expanding arbitration frameworks for cross-border investments.

Relevance to India:

- India is NOT a member of ICSID due to concerns over sovereignty.
- India prefers resolving disputes under bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and its own arbitration mechanisms.

Relevance of the World Bank Group for India

- 1. Infrastructure Development: WBG has financed major Indian projects like metro rail systems, highways, water supply, and smart cities.
- 2. Private Sector Growth: IFC supports Indian MSMEs, fintech, startups, and renewable energy firms.
- 3. Climate Action & Renewable Energy: Supports solar power projects, sustainable agriculture, and climate adaptation initiatives.
- 4. FDI & Business Environment: MIGA helps foreign investors mitigate risks in India.
- **5. Social Sector Investments:** Funds education, healthcare, and women's empowerment programs.

Recent WBG Engagements with India

- Green Energy Transition: Funding largescale solar, wind, and battery storage projects.
- Digital Economy: Support for fintech, digital payments, and rural connectivity.
- Post-COVID Recovery: Assistance in healthcare, MSME financing, and economic stability.

1.1.2.12 World Health **Organization (WHO)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to international public health.

Name of the Organization



World Health Organization (WHO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The WHO serves as the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries, and monitoring and assessing health trends.

Year of Formation

1948

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, there was a pressing need for an international body to coordinate and address global health issues. The WHO was established on April 7, 1948, to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable, ensuring that all people attain the highest possible level of health.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 194 member states
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all sovereign states that accept the organization's constitution.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is based on a country's commitment to the WHO's constitution and objectives.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: All

United Nations member states are eligible to be WHO members.

India's Membership

• Yes – India ratified the WHO Constitution and was an original member when WHO came into force in 1948. (India signed the WHO Constitution on 22 July 1946 and ratified it by Jan 1948.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The WHO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- **Promoting Health:** Advocating for universal health coverage and addressing social determinants of health.
- Keeping the World Safe: Coordinating responses to health emergencies and outbreaks.
- **Serving the Vulnerable:** Focusing on health equity and access for marginalized populations.
- **Setting Norms and Standards:** Establishing international health regulations and guidelines.
- **Providing Technical Support:** Assisting countries in strengthening their health systems.

Recent Activities

- COVID-19 Pandemic Response: Coordinated global efforts to combat the pandemic, including issuing guidelines, facilitating vaccine distribution, and monitoring variants.
- **Mpox Outbreak Management:** In 2024, the WHO granted prequalification status to the MVA-BN vaccine for mpox, enhancing vaccine accessibility in affected regions.
- **Tuberculosis Monitoring:** Reported in October 2024 that tuberculosis had become the leading cause of death from infectious diseases, surpassing COVID-19.

Recent News & Initiatives



- U.S. Withdrawal: In January 2025, the United States announced its intent to withdraw from the WHO, citing concerns over the organization's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Global Health Campaigns: Ongoing initiatives addressing antimicrobial resistance, mental health, and universal health coverage.

India-Specific Developments

- April 2022: On April 20, 2022, the WHO, in partnership with the Government of India, inaugurated the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar, Gujarat. This center aims to integrate traditional medicine into modern healthcare systems, promoting evidence-based research and practices. The establishment underscores India's rich heritage in traditional medicine and its commitment to global health.
- October 2024: In October 2024, WHO recognized India's National Regulatory Authority (NRA) as meeting its global standards for vaccine regulation. This acknowledgment reflects India's robust regulatory framework ensuring the quality, safety, and efficacy of vaccines produced and distributed within the country.
- **December 2024:** In December 2024, WHO and Indian health authorities emphasized the importance of collaborative surveillance to strengthen the public health response to Mpox (monkeypox). Joint efforts focused on enhancing detection, reporting, and management of cases to prevent further transmission.
- December 2024: By December 2024, India had made significant progress in eliminating mercury-based medical devices from its healthcare sector. This initiative aligns with WHO's global efforts to reduce mercury exposure, promoting safer and more sustainable healthcare practices.
- January 2025: In January 2025, WHO released its India Annual Report for 2024,

- detailing collaborative health initiatives, achievements, and ongoing challenges. The report highlights efforts in areas such as pandemic preparedness, vaccination drives, and health system strengthening.
- **COVID-19 Collaboration:** The WHO has worked closely with India to manage the pandemic, providing technical support and guidance on vaccination drives.
- Tuberculosis Eradication Efforts: Collaborated on programs aiming to reduce TB incidence and mortality rates in India.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** As the leading global health authority, the WHO's comprehensive mandate covers a wide range of health issues, from infectious diseases to noncommunicable diseases and health system strengthening.
- **Similar Organizations:** While other entities like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) operate at national levels, the WHO provides a platform for international collaboration and sets global health standards.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:** Examinations have included questions on the WHO's role in global health crises, its functions, and its relationship with member countries.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » **Establishment Date:** April 7, 1948.
 - » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
 - » **Membership:** 194 member states.
 - » Primary Functions: Global health leadership, setting health standards, providing technical support, and monitoring health trends.
 - » Recent Initiatives: COVID-19 response, mpox vaccine prequalification, and tuberculosis monitoring.

Understanding the WHO's role is crucial for exams, as it plays a central part in shaping global health policies, coordinating responses to health emergencies, and promoting equitable health access worldwide.

1.1.2.13 WIPO

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting and protecting intellectual property (IP) rights globally.

Name of the Organization

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

WIPO serves as the global forum for intellectual property services, policy, information, and cooperation. Its mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all. WIPO provides a platform for its member states to develop and harmonize IP laws and offers services for international applications for patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. Additionally, it facilitates dispute resolution and delivers capacity-building programs to support the effective use of IP worldwide.

Year of Formation

WIPO was established by the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization, which was signed in 1967 and entered into force on April 26, 1970. It became a specialized agency of the United Nations in December 1974.

Why they formed it?

Prior to WIPO's establishment, the protection of intellectual property was managed by the United International Bureaux for the Protection of Intellectual Property (BIRPI), founded in 1893. As technological advancements and international trade expanded, there was a growing need for a more robust and comprehensive system to address

the complexities of IP rights across different jurisdictions. This led to the creation of WIPO, aiming to promote the protection of intellectual property worldwide through cooperation among states and international organizations.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 193 member states
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any state that is a member of the United Nations, any of its specialized agencies, or the International Atomic Energy Agency. States must adhere to WIPO's objectives and pay the required contributions.

Who are its members?

- Basis Selection: Membership is voluntary and based on a state's commitment to the promotion and protection of intellectual property rights.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: WIPO's membership encompasses a vast majority of the world's nations, reflecting a global consensus on the importance of intellectual property rights.

India's Membership

Yes - India joined WIPO on 1 May 1975 and participates as a Contracting State in WIPO conventions.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

WIPO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

Developing International IP Laws and



Standards: Facilitating the negotiation and adoption of international treaties and agreements to harmonize IP laws globally.

- **Providing Global IP Services:** Offering systems for the international registration of patents (Patent Cooperation Treaty), trademarks (Madrid System), and industrial designs (Hague System).
- **Facilitating Dispute Resolution:** Through the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center, providing alternative dispute resolution options for IP conflicts.
- Capacity Building and **Technical Assistance:** Assisting developing countries in building their IP infrastructure and enhancing their ability to utilize IP for economic development.
- **Public Outreach and Education: Raising** awareness about the importance of IP and providing educational resources through initiatives like the WIPO Academy.

Recent Activities

- Adoption of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty (2024): In November 2024, WIPO member states approved a new treaty aimed at simplifying and harmonizing the process for designers to protect their industrial designs internationally.
- **Milestone in Patent Publications (2024):** By December 2024, WIPO's international patent system published its 5 millionth patent application, marking a significant achievement facilitating in global innovation.
- **World Intellectual Property Indicators** Report (2023): The report highlighted a record high in global patent filings, with India-based applicants experiencing a 15.7% increase, marking their fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth.

Recent News & Initiatives

Focus on Agricultural Innovation Hubs (2024): The World Intellectual Property Report examined how regions

like São Paulo (Brazil), Nairobi (Kenya), and Colorado (USA) have become leading producers in specific agricultural technologies, emphasizing the role of government support in building local innovative capabilities.

Support for Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan (2024): WIPO launched a project in partnership with Pakistan's Intellectual Property Organization to support over 40 women entrepreneurs in the embroidery and crafts sector, helping them utilize IP tools to advance their businesses.

India-Specific Developments

- Growth in Patent Filings: India has seen a significant rise in patent applications, with a 15.7% increase reported in 2023, marking the fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth.
- **National IPR Policy Implementation:** Since announcing its first National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy in 2016, India has continued to strengthen its IP framework. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) oversees various IP portfolios, aiming to foster innovation and creativity.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: As a specialized UN agency, WIPO uniquely focuses on the global promotion and protection of intellectual property rights, offering a comprehensive range of services and support to its member states.
- **Similar Organizations:**
- **Unique Aspects:**
 - » WIPO is the only UN agency solely dedicated to intellectual property (IP), ensuring international cooperation and legal protection for IP rights.
 - » It administers key global IP systems, such as the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), Madrid System (trademarks), and Hague System (industrial designs), which help



- businesses and innovators secure TP protection worldwide.
- » Unlike other organizations, **WIPO** focuses on both IP policy development and practical services, such as dispute resolution and registration facilitation.

Similar Organizations:

- » World Trade Organization (WTO) -Deals with Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), global minimum which sets standards, while WIPO manages global IP registration and cooperation.
- » National & Regional Patent Offices (e.g., USPTO, EPO, JPO) - These offices grant patents and trademarks within their jurisdictions, while WIPO facilitates international filings but does not grant patents itself.
- » UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) - Discusses IP's role in economic development, while WIPO provides direct support to governments and businesses for IP protection and enforcement.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » WIPO has been a recurring topic in Prelims and Mains, especially under International Relations, Economy, and Science & Technology.
- » UPSC has asked about India's IPR policy, WIPO-administered treaties, and the role of WIPO in global innovation.
- » Example: "What are the key differences between WIPO and WTO in intellectual property governance?"

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Establishment: 1967, became a UN specialized agency in 1974.
- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » **Membership:** 193 member states.

» Main Treaties Administered by WIPO:

- Convention □ Paris (1883)First international treaty for industrial property rights.
- **Berne Convention (1886)** Governs copyright protection.
- **Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)** (1970) – Simplifies international patent applications.
- □ Madrid Agreement & Madrid **Protocol** – Streamlines global trademark registration.
- Hague Agreement -Covers international industrial design protection.

» India's IP System:

- □ India follows TRIPS-compliant IP laws under WIPO & WTO frameworks.
- □ India's National IPR Policy (2016) aims to increase patent filings and streamline IP enforcement.
- Geographical Indications (GI) Registry in India aligns with WIPO's Lisbon Agreement.

» Recent Initiatives:

- □ WIPO's 2023 Global Innovation Index ranked India 40th, marking steady progress in innovation.
- □ WIPO GREEN initiative supports climate-friendly technologies developing countries, including India.

Conclusion:

WIPO plays a crucial role in the protection and promotion of intellectual property worldwide. It provides global frameworks for patents, trademarks, copyrights, and industrial designs, while also supporting innovation and economic development. For UPSC exams, understanding WIPO's functions, treaties, and India's involvement is essential for International Relations, Economy, and Science & Tech topics.

1.1.2.14 World Meteorological **Organization**





Name of the Organization

 World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The WMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that serves as the authoritative voice on the state and behavior of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with land and oceans, the weather and climate it produces, and the resulting distribution of water resources. It facilitates international cooperation in meteorology, climatology, hydrology, and related fields to enhance the well-being of societies worldwide.

Year of Formation

 The WMO was established on March 23, 1950, following the ratification of the World Meteorological Convention. It commenced operations as an intergovernmental organization in 1951 and became a specialized agency of the United Nations the same year.

Why they formed it?

The WMO originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), a non-governmental entity founded in 1873 to facilitate the exchange of weather data and research. As the importance of meteorological services grew, especially for aviation, shipping, agriculture, and disaster mitigation, there was a recognized need for a formal intergovernmental organization to coordinate global efforts. This led to the adoption of the World Meteorological Convention in 1947 and the subsequent establishment of the WMO.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 191 Member States and Territories
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any Member State or Territory of the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is voluntary and based on a state's or territory's commitment to the objectives of the WMO, including the promotion of international cooperation in meteorology, climatology, hydrology, and related fields.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** The WMO's extensive membership includes almost all UN member countries, reflecting a global consensus on the importance of coordinated meteorological and hydrological services.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India's Meteorological Department became a member in April 1949. (India has been involved since WMO's early years.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

The WMO's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- International Cooperation: Providing a framework for collaboration among national meteorological and hydrological services worldwide.
- **Standardization:** Promoting the standardization of meteorological and hydrological observations to ensure consistency and reliability of data.
- Data Exchange: Facilitating the free and unrestricted exchange of data, information, and research between member countries.
- Capacity Building: Assisting in the development of national meteorological and hydrological services, particularly in developing countries, through training



and resource support.

- **Research and Development:** Encouraging research in meteorology, climatology, hydrology, and related fields to advance scientific understanding and improve services.
- **Early Warning Systems:** Enhancing the capabilities of nations to provide accurate and timely weather forecasts and warnings to protect life and property.

Recent Activities

- Unified Data Policy (2021): The World Meteorological Congress approved a new Unified Data Policy to enhance the acquisition and international exchange of weather, climate, and water data.
- **Record Atmospheric Pollutant Levels** (2023): The WMO reported unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases, with carbon dioxide concentrations reaching 420 parts per million, primarily due to persistent fossil fuel use.
- Hottest Year on Record (2024): Projections indicated that 2024 would surpass previous temperature records, exceeding the pre-industrial average by 1.5°C, prompting a "Red Alert" from the WMO.
- El Niño Declaration (2023): The WMO declared the onset of an El Niño event on July 4, 2023, anticipating significant meteorological impacts globally.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Climate Change **Awareness** Collaboration (2024): The WMO partnered with the International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) to raise awareness about climate change impacts on winter sports and tourism.
- Leadership **Appointment** (2024): Meteorologist Celeste Saulo became the first woman to lead the WMO, emphasizing the urgent need for global cooperation to address climate change.

Global River Drying Report (2023): The WMO reported that global rivers dried up at the fastest rate in 30 years, affecting water supplies and highlighting the impacts of climate change.

India-Specific Developments

- January 2025: In January 2025, the WMO joined the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Established in 1875, the IMD has been pivotal in advancing meteorological services in India. During the event, the IMD unveiled its "Vision 2047" document, aiming to mainstream weather and climate information to transform India into a weather-ready and climate-smart nation. This vision emphasizes integrating meteorological data into national objectives to enhance socio-economic conditions.
- April 2024: In April 2024, the WMO released a report indicating that 2023 was the warmest year on record, with the global average near-surface temperature at 1.45°C above the pre-industrial baseline. This report underscored the escalating impacts of climate change, emphasizing the need for countries, including India, to intensify efforts in climate mitigation and adaptation.
- October 2024: In October 2024, the WMO published a report highlighting that 2023 was the driest year for global rivers in over three decades. This finding signaled critical changes in water availability amid growing demand. The report's insights are particularly relevant for India, where water resource management is crucial for agriculture and overall sustainability.
- El Niño Impact on Agriculture (2023): In response to the 2023-2024 El Niño event, the Indian government banned the export of non-basmati rice to manage domestic supply and prices, as El Niño conditions can affect monsoon patterns critical for agriculture.
- **Enhanced Early Warning Systems:** India





has been collaborating with the WMO to improve its meteorological services, focusing on advanced early warning systems to better prepare for extreme weather events.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: The WMO is the sole UN agency dedicated to meteorology, climatology, hydrology, and related

• Unique Aspects:

- » WMO is the only UN agency exclusively dedicated to meteorology, climatology, and hydrology, providing scientific data, early warning systems, and global weather monitoring.
- » It plays a critical role in disaster preparedness, issuing cyclone alerts, flood forecasts, and extreme weather warnings.
- » Unlike other organizations, WMO ensures free and unrestricted international exchange of meteorological hydrological data, crucial for aviation, agriculture, and climate studies.

Similar Organizations:

- » Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – IPCC assesses scientific studies on climate change but does not collect real-time data or issue weather forecasts like WMO.
- » United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – UNEP focuses on environmental sustainability and climate policies, whereas WMO monitors climate and provides meteorological insights.
- » National Meteorological Agencies (e.g., IMD, NOAA, UK Met Office) - These provide national forecasts, but WMO coordinates international weather data sharing and climate research.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » WMO has been a topic in UPSC Prelims and Mains, especially in Geography, Environment, Disaster Management, and International Organizations.
- » UPSC has asked about climate reports, cyclonic patterns, monsoons, and India's role in global meteorology.
- » Example: "What is the role of WMO in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation?"

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** 1950, became a UN specialized agency in 1951.
- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » **Membership:** 191 member states and territories.

» Key WMO Programs & Initiatives:

- ☐ Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) – Provides climate information for policy-making.
- Early Warnings for All (EW4All) -Aims to protect every citizen with early warning systems by 2027.
- ☐ Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) - Monitors greenhouse gas levels and air pollution.
- □ State of the Global Climate Reports – Annual reports assessing climate trends and extreme weather events.

» India's Involvement:

- □ India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an active WMO participant in regional forecasting.
- □ Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) studies by WMO-affiliated institutes help predict monsoon variability.
- WMO-accredited □ India hosts Regional Climate Centres, contributing to cyclone tracking and seasonal forecasts.

» Recent Initiatives:

□ WMO's 2024 "Red Alert" on **Global Warming** – Declared 2024 as the hottest year ever recorded.

- □ **WMO-El Niño Forecasts** Warned of agricultural disruptions in India, Australia, and South America.
 - □ WMO's 2023 River Drying Report
- Highlighted rapid decline in global freshwater reserves.

WMO is crucial for global weather forecasting, climate monitoring, and disaster risk reduction. It provides real-time data for monsoons, cyclones, droughts, and extreme weather events, directly impacting agriculture, economy, and disaster preparedness. For UPSC Exams, WMO's climate reports, India's meteorological advancements, and international climate agreements are key areas to study in Geography, Environment, and Disaster Management.

1.1.2.15 UN Tourism

The United **Nations** World **Tourism** Organization (UNWTO), now known as UN Tourism, is a specialized agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.

Name of the Organization

Nations World Organization (UNWTO), rebranded as UN Tourism in January 2024.

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNTourism serves as the leading international organization in the field of tourism, promoting tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability. It offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

Year of Formation

• Established on November 1, 1975.

Why they formed it?

UN Tourism was established to serve as a global forum for tourism policy and a practical source of tourism knowledge. Its creation aimed to promote tourism as a means to drive

economic growth, inclusive development, and environmental sustainability, recognizing the sector's potential to contribute significantly to these areas.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

• Active.

Headquarters

• Calle Poeta Joan Maragall 42, 28020 Madrid, Spain.

Members

- Number of Members: 160 Member States, 6 Associate Members, and over 500 Affiliate Members.
- Criteria for Membership:
 - » **Member States:** Sovereign countries committed to the organization's mission.
 - » Associate Members: Territories not responsible for their external relations.
 - » Affiliate Members: Entities from the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations, and local tourism authorities.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is open to sovereign states and territories committed to promoting sustainable tourism. Affiliate membership extends to organizations and companies with interests in tourism.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** While the organization boasts a wide membership, notable non-members include the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

India's Membership

Yes - India is a member of the UNWTO (admitted 1975), the UN agency for



tourism.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UN Tourism's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Market Knowledge:** Providing data and insights on global tourism trends.
- Sustainable Tourism Policies: Promoting policies that encourage responsible and sustainable tourism.
- **Education and Training:** Fostering tourism education and capacity building.
- Technical Assistance: Offering support to countries to develop and manage tourism responsibly.

Recent Activities

- International Tourism Recovery: In 2024, global tourism reached approximately 1.4 billion international arrivals, nearly matching pre-pandemic levels. This recovery was driven by strong demand and the reopening of destinations, especially in Asia and the Pacific.
- G20 Collaboration: In June 2023, UN
 Tourism and India's G20 Presidency
 launched the Goa Roadmap for Tourism
 as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable
 Development Goals, aiming to make
 tourism a central pillar of the 2030 Agenda
 for Sustainable Development.
- Rebranding: In January 2024, the organization rebranded from UNWTO to UN Tourism to mark a new era for the global tourism sector.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Best Tourism Villages 2024: UN Tourism announced 55 rural communities recognized for their commitment to sustainable tourism, bringing the total to 254 villages in the Best Tourism Villages Network.
- World Tourism Day 2023: Celebrated under the theme "Tourism and Green

Investment," highlighting the need for more targeted investments in sustainable tourism.

India-Specific Developments

- June 2023: In June 2023, during the G20 Tourism Ministers' meeting in Goa, the Government of India and UNWTO signed an MoU to enhance cooperation and identify areas of mutual interest. This agreement aims to strengthen India's tourism sector through collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing.
- June 2023: As the knowledge partner of India's G20 Presidency, UNWTO developed the "Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." Presented in June 2023, the roadmap focuses on five priority areas: Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, and Destination Management. It provides a strategic framework to harness tourism's potential in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- September 2023: In September 2023, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in collaboration with UNWTO, launched the G20 Tourism and SDG Dashboard. This tool showcases best practices, case studies, and insights from G20 countries, serving as a reference for policymakers and stakeholders to align tourism initiatives with the SDGs.
- **September 2023:** During the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September 2023, the pivotal role of tourism in sustainable development was acknowledged. The Leaders' Declaration emphasized tourism's contribution to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental conservation, reflecting the collaborative efforts between India and UNWTO to position tourism as a key driver for achieving the SDGs.
- September 2023: On September 27, 2023, coinciding with World Tourism Day, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in partnership with UNWTO and the United

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), launched the 'Travel for LiFE' program. This initiative promotes responsible and sustainable travel practices, encouraging tourists and the tourism industry to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors.

- **Presidency Collaboration:** G20 part of its G20 Presidency in 2023, India collaborated with UN Tourism to develop the Goa Roadmap, emphasizing tourism's role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.
- Outbound Tourism Growth: India has been recognized as one of the fastestgrowing outbound travel markets, with international tourism departures increasing significantly over the past decade.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: As a specialized UN agency, UN Tourism uniquely combines global policy leadership with practical offering platform support, international cooperation in tourism.
- Similar Organizations: While other international bodies like the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) focus on the private sector, UN Tourism emphasizes intergovernmental collaboration and policy-making.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have featured questions on the structure and functions of UN agencies, including UN Tourism.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Rebranding: UNWTO rebranded to UN Tourism in January 2024.
 - » Headquarters: Located in Madrid, Spain.
 - » India's Role: Active collaboration with UN Tourism, notably during its G20 Presidency in 2023.

1.1.3 UN Programs and **Funds**

The UN programs and funds are special bodies created to address urgent global challenges such as poverty, hunger, education, environmental protection, and disaster relief. Unlike specialized agencies, these programs are directly managed by the UN and focus on providing humanitarian aid and development assistance to vulnerable populations. They rely on voluntary funding from governments, private donors, and international organizations. These programs are action-oriented and often work on the ground in conflict zones, refugee camps, and disaster-affected areas. Some well-known programs include UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), which provides food, education, and healthcare for children, and the World Food Programme (WFP), which helps fight global hunger. UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) works on poverty reduction and sustainable development, while UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) supports displaced persons and refugees. Other key programs include UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) for climate action, UN Women for gender equality, and **UNAIDS** for HIV/AIDS prevention. Unlike other UN bodies that primarily engage in diplomacy and policymaking, these programs are more practical and operational, ensuring that UN initiatives lead to real improvements in people's lives.

1.1.3.1 UNDP

The United **Nations** Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' lead agency on international development, working to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality through sustainable development.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

What it is (Nature and Function)

Clarity
OF CONCEPT
UPSC

UNDP is a global development network of the United Nations, providing expert advice, training, and grant support to developing countries. Its primary mission is to help countries achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and building resilience. UNDP works in various areas, including poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, environment and energy, and HIV/AIDS.

Year of Formation

• Established on November 22, 1965.

Why they formed it?

UNDP was formed by merging the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and the Special Fund. This consolidation aimed to streamline UN efforts in providing technical assistance and pre-investment support to developing countries, thereby avoiding duplication and enhancing the effectiveness of development aid.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• New York City, United States

Members

- Number of Members: UNDP operates in approximately 170 countries and territories.
- Criteria for Membership: UNDP serves all member states of the United Nations, providing support based on countryspecific needs and development goals.

Who are its members?

 Basis of Selection: As a UN agency, UNDP's services are available to all UN member states, focusing on countries that

- seek assistance in achieving sustainable development.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: UNDP maintains a universal presence, with no notable exclusions among UN member states.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India is an active participant. It holds a seat on the UNDP Executive Board (India is a Board member for 2023–2027), shaping UNDP policy and funding.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNDP's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Poverty Reduction: Implementing strategies to combat poverty by expanding access to economic opportunities and resources.
- **Democratic Governance:** Assisting countries in building political and legal institutions that are equitable, responsive, and open to public participation.
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Leading efforts to anticipate and prevent crises, mitigate risks, and address the root causes of conflicts and disasters.
- **Environment and Energy:** Promoting sustainable management of natural resources and access to affordable, clean energy.
- HIV/AIDS: Supporting national efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its impact.

Recent Activities

- Pandemic Response: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has been actively involved in supporting countries to assess the socio-economic impacts and develop recovery strategies.
- **Climate Action:** UNDP has intensified its efforts in climate change mitigation and adaptation, supporting countries in



- implementing their commitments under the Paris Agreement.
- Digital Transformation: Emphasizing the role of digitalization in development, UNDP has launched initiatives to bridge the digital divide and promote digital governance.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Summit of the Future: UNDP has contributed to discussions on reinvigorating multilateralism to address global challenges and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Innovation Facility: Established in 2014, the Innovation Facility offers technical assistance and seed funding to explore new approaches to complex development challenges.

India-Specific Developments

- March 2024: In March 2024, UNDP unveiled its Country Programme for India, spanning 2023 to 2027. This strategic plan aligns with India's national priorities and global commitments, including the Fifteen Year Vision (2017-2032) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027. The programme focuses on policy dialogues, knowledge exchange, and capacity building to support inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- October 2024: In October 2024, Kanni Wignaraja, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, visited India to deepen cooperation on sustainable development. Her engagements included discussions with senior government officials on climate action, One Health, and digitalization for development. She also participated in high-level events focusing on urban childcare ecosystems, SDG financing, and pandemic preparedness.
- December 2024: In December 2024,

- UNDP supported the update and release of India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2030). This strategic plan aims to set nature on a recovery trajectory by embracing a 'whole-ofgovernment' and 'whole-of-society' approach, reflecting India's commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- PROGRESS Project: UNDP India launched the PROGRESS initiative aimed at securing livelihoods, increasing incomes, and improving the quality of life for marginalized communities, including youth, women, and migrants.
- Youth Co:Lab National Innovation Challenge 2024-25: In collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), UNDP India launched this initiative to support young entrepreneurs and innovators.
- Collaboration with West Bengal: A
 Memorandum of Understanding was
 signed between the Government of
 West Bengal and UNDP to strengthen
 development collaboration in the state.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNDP distinguishes itself by its comprehensive approach to development, integrating policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity building across a wide range of sectors. Its universal presence allows it to address global challenges with localized solutions.
- Similar Organizations: While organizations like the World Bank focus primarily on financial assistance for development projects, UNDP provides a broader spectrum of support, including policy guidance and capacity development, without direct lending.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• **Past UPSC Questions:** Examinations have included questions on the roles and functions of UN agencies, including UNDP's contributions to sustainable development

and poverty reduction.

- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Formation: Established in 1965 through the merger of EPTA and the Special Fund.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in New York City, USA.
 - » **Mission:** Focuses on eradicating reducina inequalities, poverty, and building resilience to achieve sustainable development.

1.1.3.2 UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is a prominent international organization dedicated to advocating for and protecting children's rights worldwide.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNICEF is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children globally. Its mission encompasses safeguarding children's rights, ensuring their basic needs are met, and expanding their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF operates in over 190 countries and territories, addressing issues such as child protection, education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and emergency relief.

Year of Formation

Established on December 11, 1946.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, millions of children faced dire conditions, including malnutrition, disease, and lack of shelter. Recognizing the urgent need for coordinated relief efforts, the United Nations General Assembly established UNICEF to provide immediate aid to children and mothers in countries devastated

by the war. Initially named the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, it was created to address the emergency needs of children. In 1953, as its mission expanded beyond emergency relief to long-term needs of children and mothers in developing countries, it became a permanent part of the United Nations system, adopting the name United Nations Children's Fund while retaining the original acronym.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

New York City, United States

Members

- Number of Members: UNICEF operates in over 190 countries and territories.
- Criteria for Membership: As a UN agency, UNICEF's programs and initiatives are implemented in collaboration with all member states of the United Nations.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: UNICEF works in partnership with governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders to deliver programs and services to children and mothers
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** UNICEF maintains a universal presence, ensuring that no child is excluded from its mandate, regardless of the country's political or economic status.

India's Membership

• Yes – India engages fully with UNICEF. It has served on UNICEF's 36-member Executive Board (India occupies a rotating Board seat periodically).

What it Does (Key Objectives)



UNICEF's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Child Protection:** Safeguarding children from violence, exploitation, and abuse.
- **Education:** Ensuring access to quality education for all children.
- **Health and Nutrition:** Providing essential healthcare services and combating malnutrition.
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): Improving access to clean water and promoting hygiene practices.
- **Emergency Response:** Delivering aid during natural disasters, conflicts, and other crises.
- **Advocacy:** Promoting policies partnerships that advance children's rights and well-being.

Recent Activities

- Pandemic Response: UNICEF has been at the forefront of the global COVID-19 response, facilitating the delivery of vaccines, supporting remote education, and providing hygiene supplies to communities.
- Climate Action: Emphasizing the impact of climate change on children, UNICEF has launched initiatives to build climateresilient communities and advocate for environmental policies that protect future generations.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Responding to crises in regions like Afghanistan, Sudan, and Ukraine, UNICEF has provided essential services, including healthcare, nutrition, and psychosocial support to affected children and families.

Recent News & Initiatives

Child Lens Investing Framework: In late 2024, UNICEF introduced the "child lens" for impact investing, a framework designed to help funders evaluate and optimize the effects of their investments on children's well-being.

Global Impact Evaluation Forum 2024: UNICEF, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), hosted a forum in December 2024 to discuss effective strategies for supporting children in fragile contexts.

India-Specific Developments

- October 2024: On October 11, 2024, during her visit to India, Leila Pakkala, Director of UNICEF's Supply Division, acknowledged that Indian suppliers are the third-largest providers of UNICEF's health and nutrition support to children globally. This recognition underscores India's significant role in improving children's lives worldwide through the supply of essential health commodities.
- March 2024: On March 27, 2024, UNICEF India, in collaboration with IIHMR Delhi and IIT Mumbai, launched a 10-week online digital health course for healthcare professionals. The course covers topics such as digital health interventions, telemedicine. health informatics. and cybersecurity, aiming to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance the digital competencies of health workers.
- February 2024: On February 27, 2024, renowned actor and UNICEF India National Ambassador Ayushmann Khurrana presented the Radio4Child Awards to 22 radio professionals from across the country. The awards recognized outstanding contributions in promoting child rights and issues through radio broadcasting, highlighting the media's role in advocating for children's welfare.
- Programme Country **Document** 2023-2027: UNICEF India launched a comprehensive plan aimed at addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and reinforcing partnerships to advance sustainable development goals.
- Innovate for Equality Initiative: In November 2023, UNICEF India organized



an event showcasing innovations by young minds in areas like water conservation and sustainable farming, emphasizing the role of youth in driving social change.

Educational Programs: UNICEF India has been actively promoting inclusive and equitable quality education, implementing programs to ensure all children have access to learning opportunities.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UNICEF's extensive field presence and comprehensive mandate focusing exclusively on children's rights and welfare distinguish it from other international organizations. Its ability to operate in diverse political and emergency contexts allows it to address both immediate and long-term needs of children.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like Save the Children and World Vision also focus on child welfare, UNICEF's status as a UN agency provides it with a unique platform for influencing global policies and mobilizing resources at an unparalleled scale.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » Questions have appeared on UNICEF's structure, mandate, and role in global health and child development.
- » Previous exams have included topics on UN agencies, including UNICEF's work in vaccination programs, nutrition, and child rights.
- » Questions related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3 (Good Health & Well-being) and Goal 4 (Quality Education), have indirectly covered UNICEF's initiatives.

Key Facts to Remember:

» **Formation:** Established on December 11, 1946, originally as the United Nations International Children's Emergency

Fund, later renamed United Nations Children's Fund in 1953.

- » **Headquarters:** New York City, USA.
- » **Mission:** Works in over 190 countries and territories to ensure every child's right to health, education, protection, and survival.
- » **Funding:** UNICEF is fully funded by voluntary contributions from governments, private donors, and organizations.
- Major Campaigns: Polio eradication, COVID-19 vaccine distribution (COVAX initiative), education programs, and child protection policies.
- India's Involvement: UNICEF India Country Program (2023-2027) is focused on health, education, nutrition, WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene), and child protection.

Understanding UNICEF's global role in child welfare, health, and education is crucial for UPSC exams, especially for topics under International Organizations, Global Governance, Health & Education Policies, and Social Issues.

1.1.3.3 UNCDF

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is a specialized agency of the United Nations focused on providing financial support to the world's least developed countries (LDCs).

Name of the Organization

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNCDF is the UN's flagship catalytic financing entity for the 46 least developed countries. It provides grants, concessional loans, and quarantees to support early and growthstage enterprises, local infrastructure projects, and financial inclusion initiatives. Its mission



is to unlock public and private resources to reduce poverty and support local economic development.

Year of Formation

• Established in 1966.

Why they formed it?

In the 1960s, recognizing the need for targeted financial assistance to spur economic development in the world's poorest nations, the United Nations General Assembly established UNCDF. The goal was to supplement existing capital assistance sources through grants and loans, focusing primarily on the least developed countries.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

New York City, United States

Members

- **Number of Members:** Operates in 37 least developed countries.
- Criteria for Membership: Focuses on countries classified by the United Nations as least developed, providing them with financial tools and support to achieve sustainable development.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Assists countries designated as least developed by the United Nations, aiming to address unique economic challenges and promote sustainable growth.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** Exclusively targets the 46 least developed countries, ensuring that assistance is directed where it's most needed.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India contributes to and benefits from UNCDF programs (as a developing economy). (UNCDF is managed by the UNDP Board; India's role is through that governing structure.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNCDF's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Financial Inclusion: Expanding access to financial services for individuals, households, and small businesses to promote economic participation and resilience.
- Local Development Finance: Supporting local infrastructure projects and municipal finance initiatives to drive economic growth at the community level.
- Investment Finance: Providing catalytic financial structuring, de-risking, and capital deployment to drive Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) impact, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and climate-resilient infrastructure projects.

Recent Activities

- Strategic Framework 2018-2021: Aligned with the 2030 Agenda, focusing on poverty eradication (SDG 1) and means of implementation (SDG 17).
- COVID-19 Response: Deployed digital innovations, channeled finance to subnational authorities, and injected investment funds into SMEs to stabilize local economies and accelerate recovery.
- Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL): Supported 284 local governments in 14 countries, mobilizing \$80 million in grants and technical assistance for climate adaptation projects.

Recent News & Initiatives

• Inaugural Investment in Child Nutrition: Partnered with other UN agencies to



launch investments aimed at improving child nutrition in LDCs.

Impact Fund to Combat Global Land **Degradation:** Collaborated with UNDP to announce a fund targeting land degradation issues, promoting sustainable land management practices.

India-Specific Developments

As UNCDF primarily focuses on the least developed countries, its direct involvement in India is limited. However, lessons and models from UNCDF's initiatives can inform similar programs in India, especially in areas like financial inclusion and local development finance.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNCDF distinguishes itself by providing catalytic finance specifically tailored for the least developed countries, utilizing grants, concessional loans, and guarantees to unlock public and private resources.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the World Bank and UNDP offer development assistance globally, UNCDF's niche is its exclusive focus on the unique challenges of the least developed countries, providing specialized financial tools to address their specific needs.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have featured questions on various UN agencies, including their roles and functions. Understanding UNCDF's mandate and operations can be beneficial for topics related to international organizations and development finance.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » **Formation:** Established in 1966 to assist developing countries by supplementing existing capital assistance.
 - » Headquarters: New York City, USA.
 - » Mission: Focuses unlocking on

- public and private resources in the least developed countries to reduce poverty and support local economic development.
- » Operations: **Provides** grants, concessional loans, and guarantees, primarily targeting financial inclusion, development finance, investment finance.
- » Strategic **Alignment: Aligns** its with Sustainable programs the Development Goals, especially SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Understanding UNCDF's specialized role in supporting the world's least developed countries through.

1.1.3.4 World Food **Programme**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is a leading international organization dedicated to combating global hunger and promoting food security.

Name of the Organization

World Food Programme (WFP)

What it is (Nature and Function)

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian organization focused on saving lives in emergencies and using food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability, and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters, and the impact of climate change. It provides food aid, implements school meal programs, and supports initiatives aimed at improving nutrition and food security globally.

Year of Formation

Established in 1961.

Why they formed it?

WFP was established by the United Nations in 1961 to address global hunger and food insecurity.

Its creation was driven by the recognition of the need for a coordinated international response to provide food assistance in emergencies and to support economic and social development through food aid.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Rome, Italy

Members

- Number of Members: WFP operates in over 120 countries and territories.
- Criteria for Membership: As a UN agency, WFP's programs and initiatives are implemented in collaboration with all member states of the United Nations.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: WFP works in partnership with governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders to deliver food assistance and implement programs aimed at improving food security and nutrition.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: WFP** maintains a universal presence, ensuring that assistance reaches those in need, regardless of the country's political or economic status.

India's Membership

Yes – India is a major contributor and beneficiary. It often holds a seat on WFP's Executive Board (India is listed among the 36 Board States for 2023-2025).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

WFP's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Emergency Response:** Providing lifesaving food assistance during emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters, and pandemics.
- **Nutrition:** Implementing programs to combat malnutrition, especially among children and pregnant or nursing women.
- **School Meals:** Offering school meal programs to improve children's nutrition and encourage education.
- Food Security Analysis: Conducting assessments to inform policy and program decisions related to hunger and food security.
- **Supply Chain and Logistics:** Managing the delivery of food assistance and supporting other humanitarian organizations with logistics expertise.

Recent Activities

- Nobel Peace Prize 2020: WFP was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for its efforts to combat hunger, its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflictaffected areas, and for acting as a driving force in preventing the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.
- COVID-19 Response: Durina the pandemic, WFP scaled up its operations to address the increased food insecurity caused by economic downturns and supply chain disruptions.
- Climate Change Initiatives: Launched projects aimed at strengthening climate change adaptation, such as the 'Adaptation for Resilience' (ADAPT4R) project in India and Sri Lanka to support farming climate-induced communities facing challenges.

Recent News & Initiatives

School Feeding Commitments: In 2023, 65 countries made new or strengthened commitments to school-based programs, enhancing children's nutrition and access to education.



Home-Grown School Feeding: WFP has been sourcing food from smallholder farmers, increasing their incomes and boosting local economies.

India-Specific Developments

- August 2024: In late August 2024, WFP Assistant Executive Director Valerie Guarnieri visited India to meet with senior government officials, aiming to enhance national and state programs addressing hunger and malnutrition. During her visit, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and WFP for a regional adaptation project. This project focuses on building the capacity of smallholder farmers, especially women, in dryland areas to adapt to climate-induced challenges. Additionally, Guarnieri visited a newly launched 'Grain ATM' in Odisha, an innovative grain dispensing machine that allows beneficiaries to collect their food entitlements at their convenience. This initiative has been deployed in 29 locations across six states, with plans for further expansion.
- October 2024: On October 22, 2024, WFP, in collaboration with the Ministries of Environment of India and Sri Lanka, launched the 'Adaptation for Resilience' (ADAPT4R) project. This five-year initiative, supported by a US\$14 million contribution from the Adaptation Fund, aims to improve food security and strengthen the livelihoods of farming communities facing climate-induced challenges in both countries. The project focuses on districts where adverse weather significantly impacts crops and livelihoods, providing farmers, particularly women, with tools and knowledge to build resilience against climate change.
- Distribution Public System **Enhancement:** WFP is collaborating with the Government of India to improve the efficiency and transparency of the Targeted Public Distribution System, which supplies essential commodities to approximately

800 million people.

- Food Fortification: Partnering with state governments, WFP is fortifying staples like rice distributed through government programs to combat malnutrition.
- Climate Adaptation Project: Launched the ADAPT4R project to enhance food security and livelihoods of farming communities affected by climate change in India.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: WFP's extensive reach and logistics capacity enable it to respond swiftly to emergencies worldwide. Its dual focus on immediate relief and long-term food security distinguishes it from other organizations.
- Similar While **Organizations:** organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) focus on agricultural development, WFP centers on food assistance and emergency relief, often collaborating with FAO to address hunger from multiple angles.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:** Examinations have featured questions on the roles of UN agencies, including WFP's mandate and operations.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Formation: Established in 1961.
 - » Headquarters: Rome, Italy.
 - » Mission: To eradicate hunger and malnutrition, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the need for food aid.

1.1.3.5 UNEP

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global authority on environmental issues within the United Nations system.



Name of the Organization

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNEP is the principal environmental agency of the United Nations, responsible for coordinating responses to environmental challenges. It provides leadership, delivers scientific insights, and develops solutions on a wide range of issues, including climate change, ecosystem management, and green economic development. UNEP also facilitates international environmental agreements and supports nations in achieving their environmental objectives.

Year of Formation

Established in 1972.

Why they formed it?

UNEP was founded following the landmark United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. The conference highlighted the urgent need for a dedicated body to monitor the global environment, inform policy-making with scientific data, and coordinate international efforts to address environmental challenges.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Nairobi, Kenya

Members

- **Number of Members:** UNEP's governing body, the United Nations Environment Assembly, comprises 193 member states.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to all United Nations member states.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** All UN member states are automatically members of UNEP, ensuring universal representation in environmental governance.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** There are no exclusions; all UN member states participate in UNEP's initiatives.

India's Membership

• Yes - India is a member of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEP's governing body with universal membership of 193 states), and actively participates in global environmental policy.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNEP's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Climate Action: Addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Nature Action: Promoting conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Chemicals and Pollution Action:** Working towards the sound management of chemicals and waste to minimize adverse impacts on health and the environment.
- **Environmental Governance:** Strengthening laws, policies, and institutions to support environmental sustainability.
- **Finance and Economic Transformations:** Encouraging investments in technologies and sustainable economic practices.
- Science-Policy Interface: **Providing** scientific assessments and data to inform policy decisions.
- Digital **Transformations:** Leveraging digital technologies address to environmental challenges.

Recent Activities

50th Anniversary **Celebrations:** ln



2022, UNEP marked its 50th anniversary, reflecting on five decades of environmental milestones and setting the agenda for future action.

- **Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6):** Published in 2019, the sixth edition of the GEO report provided a comprehensive assessment of the global environmental situation, offering insights and policy recommendations.
- Faith for Earth Initiative: Launched in 2017, this initiative collaborates with faith-based organizations to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Circular Economy Promotion: UNEP cofounded the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE), a public-private partnership aimed at transitioning to a global circular economy.
- Regional Seas Programme: Established in 1974, this program works to protect oceans and seas at the regional level, involving over 143 countries across 18 regional programs.

India-Specific Developments

- December 2023: In December 2023. UNEP, in partnership with the Government of India's Ministry of Textiles, launched the 'InTex India' project. This four-year initiative, funded by Denmark, aims to transition India's textile sector towards circular practices. Focusing on textile clusters in Surat and Karur, the project supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in calculating their Product Environmental implementing Footprint (PEF) and circular business models. Additionally, it seeks to build capacity and support the development of circular textile policies at the national level.
- October 2024: In October 2024, UNEP continued its Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) projects in

- the Indian states of Odisha, Bihar, and Gujarat. These projects focus on restoring and protecting wetlands, rejuvenating village ponds, and conserving water bodies. By empowering communitybased organizations, the initiative aims to integrate Eco-DRR action plans into local government development programs, enhancing resilience against climate and disaster risks.
- November 2024: Throughout 2024, India continued its active engagement with the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, established in 2017. This \$150 million fund supports demand-driven and transformational sustainable development projects across developing countries, with a focus on least developed countries and small island developing states. India's leadership in this initiative underscores its commitment to promoting shared prosperity and sustainable development globally.
- Collaborative Environmental Projects: UNEP has partnered with India on various initiatives, including promoting renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, pollution control measures.
- Capacity Building: Efforts have been enhance made India's capacity environmental governance and implementation of green technologies.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNEP serves as the authoritative advocate for the global environment within the UN system, coordinating international efforts and providing a platform for collective action.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Greenpeace focus on environmental conservation through advocacy and direct action, UNEP operates at the intergovernmental level, facilitating policy development and implementation among nations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have featured questions on UNEP's role, functions, and key environmental initiatives.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Formation: **Established** in 1972 following the Stockholm Conference.
 - » Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.
 - » Mission: To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment.
 - » **Key Areas:** Climate action, nature conservation, pollution control, governance, environmental and promotion of green technologies.
 - » Recent Initiatives: 50th anniversary in 2022, Faith for Earth Initiative, and promotion of the circular economy.

1.1.3.6 United Nations **Population Fund**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the United Nations agency dedicated to sexual and reproductive health.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNFPA is the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency. Its mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled. The organization supports countries in using population data for policies and programs to reduce poverty and ensure that every individual can enjoy their reproductive rights.

Year of Formation

Established in 1969.

Why they formed it?

In December 1966, 12 heads of state urged the United Nations to address population issues. This led to the creation of a trust fund for population in 1967, which began operations in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. The agency was established to assist countries in addressing population and family planning issues, recognizing the impact of population dynamics on development.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

New York City, United States.

Members

- **Number of Members:** UNFPA operates in over 150 countries.
- Criteria for Membership: As a UN agency, UNFPA collaborates with all member states of the United Nations.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: UNFPA works in partnership with governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders to deliver reproductive health services and support population data collection and policy development. Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: UNFPA maintains a universal presence, ensuring assistance reaches those in need across diverse regions and contexts.

India's Membership

Yes - India works closely with UNFPA. (India's membership is via the UNDP/ UNFPA Executive Board on which it serves.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNFPA's key objectives and areas of work



include:

- Reproductive Sexual and Health **Services:** Ensuring access to family planning, maternal health care, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections.
- **Adolescent and Youth Empowerment:** Providing education and services to help young people make informed choices about their reproductive health.
- Women's Gender **Equality** and **Empowerment:** Advocating for policies and programs that promote women's rights and address gender-based violence.
- Population Data for Development: Assisting countries in collecting and analyzing demographic data to inform policy and planning.

Recent Activities

- Strategic Plan 2018-2021: implemented a strategic plan aiming to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realize reproductive rights, and reduce maternal mortality.
- COVID-19 Response: During pandemic, UNFPA focused on ensuring continuity of reproductive health services, addressing gender-based violence, and supporting health systems in crisisaffected areas.
- Humanitarian **Assistance:** Provided critical reproductive health services and supplies in emergency settings, including conflict zones and natural disaster-affected areas.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Support for Women in Conflict Zones:** UNFPA has been actively providing essential healthcare services to women in conflict-affected regions, such as Gaza, where pregnant women face significant challenges due to disrupted health systems.
- **Campaigns** Against **Gender-Based**

Violence: Launched initiatives to combat practices like child marriage and female genital mutilation, aiming to protect and empower women and girls globally.

India-Specific Developments

- October 2024: In October 2024, UNFPA India commemorated its 50-year partnership with the Government of India by hosting the "50 and Beyond" event. The celebration highlighted efforts to promote gender equality, reproductive health, and women's rights. The event featured the launch of a storybook and a film showcasing UNFPA's impact over the decades.
- October 2024: During her visit in October 2024, Dr. Natalia Kanem recognized India's significant progress in maternal health and family planning. She met with Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava to commend the reduction of India's Maternal Mortality Ratio by 70% between 2000 and 2020. This achievement positions India to meet the Sustainable Development Goal target of an MMR below 70 before 2030.
- September 2023: In September 2023, UNFPA India, in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), released the "India Ageing **Report 2023."** The report provided critical insights into elderly care challenges and solutions in India, highlighting the need for policies and programs to support the growing ageing population.
- Reproductive **Programs:** Health UNFPA has collaborated with the Indian government to enhance access to family planning services and maternal health care, focusing on marginalized communities.
- **Initiatives:** Youth **Empowerment** Implemented aimed programs educating adolescents about sexual and reproductive health, promoting informed decision-making, and reducing adolescent pregnancies.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UNFPA is distinct in its exclusive focus on reproductive health and rights, population data, and gender equality, operating within the UN system to provide technical assistance and advocacy.
- Similar **Organizations:** organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) address broader health issues, UNFPA specializes in reproductive health and rights, often collaborating with WHO on related initiatives.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have included questions on the roles of UN agencies, including UNFPA's mandate and operations.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Formation: Established in 1969.
 - » Headquarters: New York City, USA.
 - » **Mission:** To ensure every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.
 - » **Key Areas:** Sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, empowerment, and population data analysis.
 - Initiatives: » Recent Focus on humanitarian assistance in conflict zones and campaigns against genderbased violence.

Understanding UNFPA's role is crucial for exams, as it plays a significant part in global gender equality, health, and population dynamics, all of which are pertinent topics in the UPSC examination.

1.1.3.7 UN-Habitat

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency dedicated to promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities,

with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

Name of the Organization

Settlements United Nations Human Programme (UN-Habitat)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UN-Habitat is the UN agency responsible for human settlements and sustainable urban development. It serves as the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system, promoting transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action.

Year of Formation

• Established in 1977.

Why they formed it?

UN-Habitat was established as an outcome of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. The conference recognized the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and the need for coordinated international efforts to promote sustainable human settlements.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Nairobi, Kenya.

Members

- Number of Members: The UN-Habitat Assembly comprises all 193 member states of the United Nations.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all United Nations member states.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: All UN member states are automatically members of ensuring the UN-Habitat Assembly, universal representation in discussions on sustainable urban development.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** There are no exclusions; all UN member states participate in UN-Habitat's initiatives.

India's Membership

Yes - India is a member of the UN-Habitat Assembly (all UN states are) and was elected to UN-Habitat's 36-member Executive Board in 2019.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UN-Habitat's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Legislation, Urban Land, and **Governance:** Assisting governments in establishing legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable urban development.
- **Urban Planning and Design: Promoting** effective urban planning to create inclusive and connected cities.
- Urban **Economy:** Enhancing economic performance and job creation.
- **Urban Basic Services:** Ensuring access to essential services such as water, sanitation, and energy.
- Housing and Slum Upgrading: Improving housing conditions and reducing the prevalence of slums.
- Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation: Building resilience to natural and humanmade disasters.
- Urban Research and Capacity Conducting **Development:** research and building capacities for sustainable urbanization.

Recent Activities

World Cities Report 2024: UN-Habitat released this flagship report focusing on

- cities and climate action, providing insights into sustainable urban development practices.
- Annual Report 2023: Highlighted local actions in times of crises, emphasizing the role of cities in addressing global challenges.
- World Urban Forum: Continued to convene this premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, facilitating discussions among stakeholders.

Recent News & Initiatives

- World Smart Cities Outlook 2024: Launched to provide guidance integrating smart technologies into urban development.
- Strategic Plan 2020–2023: Adopted to address challenges and opportunities in 21st-century urbanization, focusing on inclusivity and sustainability.

India-Specific Developments

- December 2024: In December 2024, the Young Gamechangers Initiative was launched in Jatni, Odisha. This program empowers 15 local youth with training in data collection, public space design, and digital skills.
- Collaborative Projects: UN-Habitat has partnered with Indian cities to implement sustainable planning urban and infrastructure projects, aiming to improve living conditions and resilience.
- Capacity Building: Conducted workshops and training programs for urban planners and policymakers in India to promote best practices in urban development.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UN-Habitat is the only UN agency exclusively focused on urbanization and human settlements, providing a platform for global dialogue and action on urban issues.
- Similar **Organizations:** While

organizations like the World Bank and UNDP engage in urban development, UN-Habitat specializes in normative guidance and technical expertise specifically tailored to sustainable urbanization.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have included guestions on UN-Habitat's role, its flagship reports, and global urban initiatives.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Formation: Established 1977 in following Habitat I conference.
 - » Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.
 - » Mission: To promote socially and environmentallysustainable towns and cities.
 - » Key Areas: Urban planning, housing, basic services, and governance.
 - » Recent Initiatives: World Cities Report 2024 and Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

Understanding UN-Habitat's role is crucial for exams, as sustainable urban development is a significant topic in global development agendas and national policy frameworks.

1.1.3.8 UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a United Nations agency established to combat illicit drugs, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism.

Name of the Organization

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNODC is a global leader in addressing issues related to illicit drug use, transnational organized crime, corruption, and terrorism. It assists Member States in their efforts to combat these challenges by providing research, policy guidance, and technical assistance. The agency focuses on enhancing justice, health, and security to build resilient societies and improve everyday life for individuals and communities worldwide.

Year of Formation

• Established in 1997.

Why they formed it?

UNODC was formed by merging the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division. This consolidation aimed to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to the interconnected issues of drug control, crime prevention, and international terrorism, recognizing the evolving nature of these global challenges.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Vienna, Austria.

Members

- **Number of Members:** As a United Nations office, UNODC serves all 193 UN member states.
- Criteria for Membership: All UN member states are stakeholders and beneficiaries of UNODC's programs and initiatives.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: UNODC operates universally, providing assistance and fostering cooperation among all UN member states to address issues related to drugs, crime, corruption, and terrorism.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: There are no exclusions; all UN member states engage with UNODC's initiatives.



India's Membership

 Yes – India cooperates with UNODC. (While UNODC has no formal members, India is party to UN drug conventions and is a member of UNODC-governed bodies like the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNODC's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Countering Illicit Drug Use and Trafficking: Implementing programs to reduce drug demand and supply, and assisting in the development of drug control policies.
- Combating Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing issues such as human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, and illicit trade.
- Preventing Terrorism: Providing legal and technical assistance to prevent and combat terrorism.
- **Fighting Corruption:** Supporting the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and promoting integrity in public and private sectors.
- **Strengthening Criminal Justice Systems:** Enhancing the rule of law through judicial reforms, prison management, and crime prevention strategies.
- Promoting Health and Alternative Development: Addressing drug dependence treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention, and sustainable livelihoods to reduce reliance on illicit crop cultivation.

Recent Activities

- World Drug Report 2024: UNODC released this report highlighting a concerning rise in global drug use and the emergence of potent new synthetic opioids, exacerbating health, social, and environmental impacts.
- Capacity Building Initiatives: Conducted

training programs for law enforcement and judicial officials worldwide to enhance responses to drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption. Strategic Partnerships: Collaborated with international and regional organizations to strengthen collective security measures and promote sustainable development.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **RiseUp4Peace Initiative:** Launched to empower young people and educators in promoting peace, justice, and inclusivity through education, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 16.
- Family Empowerment Programs: Implemented initiatives focusing on strengthening family units to protect young people from drugs and crime, recognizing the pivotal role of families in youth development.

India-Specific Developments

- June 2024: On June 27, 2024, UNODC presented key findings from its World Drug Report 2024 in New Delhi to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The report highlighted a concerning rise in global drug use and the emergence of potent new synthetic opioids. Discussions emphasized the need for evidence-based prevention programs and comprehensive strategies to address drug-related challenges.
- Law Enforcement Training: UNODC, in collaboration with India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, conducted capacity-building programs for law enforcement officials to enhance their ability to detect, investigate, and dismantle drug trafficking networks.
- Policy Development **Workshops:** Organized Indian sessions with effective policymakers to develop responses to drug use disorders, emphasizing evidence-based strategies and regional cooperation.



Youth and Educator Engagement: Through the RiseUp4Peace initiative, UNODC engaged Indian youth and educators in promoting a culture of peace, rule of law, and integrity beyond classroom settings.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNODC stands out for its integrated approach to addressing interconnected issues of drugs, crime, corruption, and terrorism, providing comprehensive support ranging from policy development to on-the-ground technical assistance.
- Similar Organizations: While agencies like INTERPOL focus on international policing and crime control, UNODC combines crime prevention with drug control and health initiatives, operating within the broader UN framework to promote justice and security.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » Ouestions related to international organizations, especially those involved in crime prevention, drug control, and counterterrorism, have appeared in **UPSC Prelims and Mains.**
- » Previous exams have included questions on UN Conventions such as the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), both of which are overseen by UNODC.
- » Questions on India's role in combating drug trafficking, cybercrime, and money laundering have also been asked.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Formation:** Established in 1997 through the merger of two UN programs.
- » Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.
- » Mission: Focuses on drug control, crime prevention, corruption, human

- trafficking, and terrorism prevention.
- » India's Engagement: Collaborates with Indian law enforcement agencies and policymakers on drug control, antihuman trafficking, and financial crime prevention.
- » Major Reports: Publishes the World Drug Report and Global Report on **Trafficking in Persons**, which are relevant for UPSC.
- » Important **Treaties:** Administers UNCAC, UNTOC, and international drug control conventions.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

• Why it's Important?

- » UNODC is a key agency for global security, addressing drug trafficking, organized crime, money laundering, terrorism—topics corruption, and frequently asked in UPSC.
- » **Link to India:** India is a major stakeholder due to its geographic location between the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran) and the Golden Triangle (Myanmar-Thailand-Laos)—two major global drug-producing regions.
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): UNODC's work on anti-corruption measures and criminal justice reforms is useful for case studies.

1.1.3.9 UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a global organization dedicated to protecting and assisting refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless individuals.

Name of the Organization

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNHCR is a United Nations agency mandated

to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of people who have been forced to flee their countries due to conflict. persecution, or violence. The agency strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally, or

Year of Formation

resettle in a third country.

Established on December 14, 1950.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, millions of people were displaced across Europe. The international community recognized the need for a dedicated organization to address the refugee crisis and provide protection and assistance to those forced to flee their homes. This led to the establishment of UNHCR with a three-year mandate to resolve refugee issues and find durable solutions.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

- **Number of Members:** As a United Nations agency, UNHCR serves all 193 UN member states.
- **Criteria for Membership:** All UN member states are stakeholders in UNHCR's mission and contribute to its governance and funding

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: UNHCR operates under the authority of the UN General Assembly

- and the Economic and Social Council. with member states participating in its Executive Committee, which approves the agency's biennial programs and budget.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:** All UN member states are involved; there are no exclusions.

India's Membership

• Yes – India is a member of UNHCR's Executive Committee (the governing ExCom), which it joined in 1995. India has continued as an ExCom member (currently 107 nations). (Note: India is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention, but it helps *quide UNHCR policy through ExCom.)*

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNHCR's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Protection:** Ensuring the basic human rights of refugees and seeking durable solutions to their plight.
- **Emergency Response:** Providing lifesaving assistance during emergencies, including shelter, food, water, and medical care.
- **Advocacy:** Promoting policies and laws that protect refugees and displaced persons.
- **Statelessness:** Preventing and reducing statelessness and protecting stateless individuals.
- **Durable Solutions:** Facilitating voluntary repatriation, local integration, resettlement to third countries.

Recent Activities

• Global Compact on Refugees: UNHCR has been instrumental in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees, aiming to improve international responses to refugee situations through equitable burden-sharing and enhanced support to host countries.



- **COVID-19 Response:** The agency has provided critical support to refugees and host communities during the pandemic, ensuring access to healthcare, sanitation, and protective equipment.
- **Afghan Crisis Response:** Following the events in Afghanistan in 2021, UNHCR has been actively involved in assisting displaced Afghans, both within the country and in neighboring regions.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Rohingya Refugee Support: UNHCR continues to advocate for the rights and protection of Rohingya refugees, providing assistance in camps and working towards durable solutions.
- **Education Initiatives:** Emphasizing the importance of education for refugee children, UNHCR has launched programs to improve access to schooling and learning resources.

India-Specific Developments

- **Assistance to Refugees:** UNHCR supports the Indian government in providing aid to various refugee groups, including Afghans, Myanmar nationals, and others, across multiple states.
- **Detention Concerns:** In September 2024, over 100 Rohingya refugees in Assam initiated a hunger strike to protest prolonged detention. UNHCR has expressed concerns and urged for alternatives to detention.
- **Educational Barriers:** Rohingya refugee children in India have faced challenges accessing formal education due to their legal status. UNHCR continues to advocate for their inclusion in the education system.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects: UNHCR is distinct in its specific mandate to protect and support refugees and stateless individuals globally, operating under the UN framework.

Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) address broader migration issues, UNHCR focuses primarily on refugees and stateless persons.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » UPSC has asked guestions related to international organizations involved in humanitarian work, including UNHCR's role in refugee protection.
- » Questions have appeared in Prelims and Mains about India's refugee policies, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and the status of Rohingya refugees.
- » Mains GS-2 (International Relations) often includes questions on global refugee crises, India's stance on asylum seekers, and UNHCR's role in conflict regions like Afghanistan, Syria, and Myanmar.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Formation:** Established on December 14, 1950.
- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » Mission: Protect refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless individuals, and provide humanitarian assistance and legal support.
- » **Key Reports:** Publishes the Global Trends Report (annual data on displacement worldwide).
- » **India's Position:** India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention but follows a case-by-case approach to refugees.
- » Recent Refugee Crises: UNHCR has been actively involved in Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, and Rohingya issues.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

Why is UNHCR important for UPSC?

- » GS-2 (Governance, International Relations): Covers refugee issues, India's asylum policies, and international law.
- » **GS-3** (Security Issues): Relevant in topics like illegal migration, terrorism, and cross-border human trafficking.
- » **Essay Paper:** Topics on humanitarian crises, migration, and stateless persons often appear.
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): UNHCR's work on human rights, empathy, and justice can be useful for case studies.

1.1.3.10 UNRWA

Name of the Organization

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established provide to assistance protection to Palestine refugees. Its services include education, healthcare, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance, and emergency response. The agency operates in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, aiming to help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential in human development pending a just solution to their plight.

Year of Formation

• Established on December 8, 1949.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, over 700,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes. Recognizing the urgent need to address the humanitarian crisis, the United Nations General Assembly established UNRWA to provide relief and works programs for Palestine refugees, aiming to prevent starvation and distress and to further conditions of peace and stability.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

UNRWA's headquarters divided are between Amman, Jordan, and Gaza City, Palestine.

Members

- Number of Members: As a UN agency, UNRWA's operations are overseen by the UN General Assembly, comprising all 193 member states.
- Criteria for Membership: All UN member states participate in the governance and funding of UNRWA through the General Assembly.

Who are its members?

- **Basis of Selection:** UNRWA operates under the mandate of the UN General Assembly, with member states contributing to its budget and policy direction.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions: All UN member states are involved in supporting UNRWA's mission; there are no exclusions.

India's Membership

Yes – India is not within UNRWA's regional mandate, but it became an Observer/ Member of the UNRWA Advisorv Commission in recent years. In 2021 the UN General Assembly welcomed India as the newest member of UNRWA's Advisory Commission. (India also contributes funding to UNRWA.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNRWA's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Education:** Operating one of the largest school systems in the Middle East, UNRWA provides free basic education to over 543,000 students across 711 schools.
- **Healthcare:** Offering primary healthcare services to approximately 1.9 million refugees through a network of clinics and health centers.
- **Relief and Social Services:** Providing food aid, cash assistance, and shelter support to vulnerable refugee families.
- Infrastructure and Camp Improvement: Enhancing living conditions in refugee camps through infrastructure projects and maintenance.
- **Microfinance:** Offering financial services to promote economic self-reliance among refugees.
- Emergency Response: Delivering humanitarian aid during conflicts and crises affecting Palestine refugees.

Recent Activities

- Funding Challenges: UNRWA has faced significant financial difficulties due to reduced contributions from major donors, leading to budget shortfalls and appeals for increased international support.
- COVID-19 Response: The agency implemented measures to combat the pandemic, including health awareness campaigns, distribution of hygiene kits, and adjustments to educational programs to facilitate remote learning.
- Operational Hurdles: In early 2024, Israel enacted laws prohibiting UNRWA's operations within its territory, citing security concerns and alleged ties to militant groups. This has led to the closure of offices and suspension of services in certain areas, significantly impacting the delivery of essential services to refugees.

Recent News & Initiatives

International Recognition: In September 2024, the Government of Navarra honored

- UNRWA for its dedication to human rights and support for the Palestinian population, acknowledging the sacrifices of its staff in conflict zones.
- **Operational Challenges:** The recent Israeli ban on UNRWA's activities has raised concerns among international stakeholders about the potential exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank. Discussions are ongoing to address these challenges and ensure the continuation of vital services to refugees.

India-Specific Developments

- **Financial Contributions:** India consistently supported UNRWA, increasing its annual contribution from US\$1.25 million to US\$5 million in 2018. In 2024. India released the first tranche of US\$2.5 million as part of its annual contribution, reaffirming its commitment to the welfare of Palestine refugees.
- **Advisory Commission Membership:** In December 2020, India joined UNRWA's Advisory Commission, participating in policy formulation and oversight to enhance the agency's effectiveness.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNRWA is the only UN agency dedicated exclusively to assisting a specific refugee population, providing comprehensive services directly Palestine refugees.
- **Similar Organizations:** The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) addresses global refugee issues but does not cover Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions:
 - » India's Role in UN Organizations: Ouestions have been asked on India's contributions to UN agencies, including UNRWA and UNHCR.

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- » Palestinian Issue & India's Foreign Policy: Mains GS-2 has included questions on India's stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict and its support for Palestinian refugees.
- » International Refugee Law: Questions related to UN refugee conventions, India's policy on refugees, and global humanitarian organizations have been seen in GS-2 (International Relations).

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established on December 8, 1949, by the UN General Assembly.
- » Headquarters: Amman, Jordan, and Gaza City, Palestine.
- » Mandate: **Provides** education, healthcare. social services, and emergency relief to Palestine refugees.
- » Unique Nature: Unlike UNHCR, which deals with global refugees, UNRWA is the only UN agency dedicated to a specific refugee group (Palestinians).
- » India's Support: India has increased its financial contributions and joined UNRWA's Advisory Commission in 2020.
- » Major Challenges: Funding shortages, political instability, and recent bans on operations by Israel are major concerns for UNRWA's future.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

Why is UNRWA Important for UPSC?

- » GS-2 (International Relations & Global Governance): Covers India's multilateral engagement, UN agencies, and refugee issues.
- » GS-3 (Security Issues): Impact of refugee crises on geopolitics and regional security (Gaza crisis, West Asian geopolitics).
- » Essay related Paper: **Topics** to humanitarian issues, refugee crises, and international governance.
- » Ethics (GS-4): UNRWA's role

of humanitarian assistance, ethics international aid, and justice for displaced communities.

1.1.3.11 UN Women

Name of the Organization

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

What it is (Nature and Function)

UN Women is a United Nations entity dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It serves as a global champion for women and girls, aiming to accelerate progress in meeting their needs worldwide. The organization works to develop and uphold standards, create an environment where every woman and girl can exercise her human rights, and ensure their full participation in all aspects of life.

Year of Formation

UN Women was established on July 2, 2010, and became operational on January 1, 2011.

Why they formed it?

Prior to UN Women's establishment, multiple UN bodies addressed gender equality, including the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The fragmentation and lack of a unified entity led to calls for a more coherent and effective approach. In response, the UN General Assembly merged these entities to form UN Women, aiming to consolidate resources and mandates to better advocate for women's rights and gender equality.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization



Status

Active

Headquarters

New York City, United States

Members

- Number of Members: UN Women is governed by an Executive Board comprising 41 member states.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Members are elected based on equitable geographical distribution and serve terms as defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Members are selected to ensure representation from all regions, including Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Europe, and other states.
- Notable Inclusions or **Exclusions:** Membership reflects a diverse group of countries committed to advancing gender equality, with no notable exclusions.

India's Membership

 Yes – India sits on UN Women's Executive Board (and even served as Board Bureau president in 2022). It is a current Board member (term through 2027).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UN Women's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Women's Leadership and Political Participation: Promoting women's full involvement in decision-making processes at all levels.
- Economic Empowerment: Enhancing women's access to economic resources and opportunities.
- Ending Violence Against Women: Implementing programs and policies to

prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

- **Peace and Security:** Ensuring women's peacebuilding participation in recovery efforts.
- **Humanitarian Action:** Addressing the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian crises.
- Gender-Responsive **Governance:** Integrating gender perspectives into governance systems and public policies.

Recent Activities

- Global Advocacy: UN Women has been instrumental in advocating for gender-responsive policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the disproportionate impact on women and the need for inclusive recovery plans.
- Campaigns and Initiatives: Launched global campaigns such as "Generation **Equality"** to accelerate gender equality actions and commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
- Partnerships: Strengthened collaborations with governments, civil society, and the private sector to promote women's empowerment and address systemic inequalities.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Corporate Recognition: In December 2024, UN Women India honored corporate leaders committed to gender equality at the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) India Awards.
- STEM Empowerment: In July 2024, UN Women launched the WeSTEM project in Madhya Pradesh, India, aiming to upskill 2,000 young women from tribal areas for careers in STEM fields.

India-Specific Developments

• December 2024: In December 2024, UN Women India honored corporate leaders

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committed to gender equality at the 2024 Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) India Awards. This annual event celebrated organizations and leaders making exceptional strides in fostering inclusive workplaces, marketplaces, and communities, setting a benchmark for corporate excellence in India's gender equality landscape.

- Strategic Presence: UN Women India operates from New Delhi and extends its programs across 14 states, focusing on gender-responsive governance, economic empowerment, and ending violence against women.
- Private Sector Engagement: Mobilized over 390 private sector companies to commit to the Women's Empowerment Principles, promoting gender-responsive business practices.
- **Campaigns:** Reached Awareness million people through #YOUDONTSEEME campaign, addressing stereotypes and advocating for gender equality.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UN Women consolidates multiple mandates within the UN system to provide a unified and authoritative voice for gender equality, streamlining efforts that were previously dispersed across various entities.
- Similar Organizations: While other UN agencies like UNFPA and UNICEF address aspects of women's rights and welfare, UN Women specifically focuses overarching gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

» UPSC Prelims and Mains have included questions on international organizations related to social justice and gender equality, including UN Women.

- » Mains GS-2 (Governance, Social Justice, and International Relations) has featured topics on women's empowerment, gender-responsive policies, and India's role in global gender equality initiatives.
- » **Essay Paper:** Topics related to gender equality, women's rights, and social development often appear, making UN Women's work highly relevant.
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): UN Women's focus on gender justice, workplace equity, and human rights aligns with ethical case studies in governance.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established 2010, in operational from 2011.
- » Headquarters: New York City, USA.
- » Mission: Advancing gender equality, empowering women, eliminating discrimination, and ensuring women's rights globally.
- » Global Reports: Publishes the Gender Snapshot Report, highlighting progress on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and women's issues worldwide.
- » India's Role: UN Women collaborates with the Government of India, NITI Aayog, and state governments on gender-responsive governance and policy implementation.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

- Why is UN Women Important for UPSC?
 - » GS-1 (Indian Society): Covers genderrelated challenges, social reforms, and historical progress of women's rights.
 - » GS-2 (Governance & International Relations): Includes women's policies, global initiatives, and India's role in gender equality at the UN.
 - » GS-3 (Economic **Development):** Focuses on women's participation in the workforce, financial inclusion, and social entrepreneurship.





- » Essay Paper: Possible topics include discrimination, gender women's feminist empowerment, and movements.
- » Ethics (GS-4): UN Women's work on equal pay, gender justice, and leadership roles can provide case study examples.

1.1.3.12 UNAIDS

Name of the Organization

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS (UNAIDS)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNAIDS is a collaborative United Nations program that leads and inspires global efforts to prevent new HIV infections, provide treatment and support to those living with HIV, and reduce the impact of the epidemic. It unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations and works closely with global and national partners to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Year of Formation

UNAIDS was established on July 26, 1994, by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and became operational in January 1996.

Why they formed it?

Before UNAIDS, the global response to HIV/AIDS was managed by the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS. However, as the epidemic grew, it became evident that a more comprehensive and coordinated approach was necessary, involving multiple sectors beyond health. This led to the creation of UNAIDS to coordinate efforts across various UN agencies and partners, ensuring a unified and effective response to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva,

Switzerland.

Members

Number of Members: UNAIDS is a joint program comprising 11 cosponsoring UN organizations.

Full List of Members:

- » United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- » United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- » World Food Programme (WFP)
- » United **Nations** Development Programme (UNDP)
- » United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- » United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- » International Labour Organization (ILO)
- » United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- » World Health Organization (WHO)
- » World Bank
- » UN Women

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: The cosponsoring organizations were selected based on their mandates and capacities to address various aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, ensuring a comprehensive and multisectoral response.
- **Notable Inclusions:** The inclusion of diverse agencies, from health (WHO) to education (UNESCO) and labor (ILO), highlights the multifaceted approach UNAIDS employs in combating HIV/AIDS.



India's Membership

 Yes – India is a member of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. It has served as PCB chair before and was elected again to the Board for 2023–2025.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNAIDS' key objectives and areas of work include:

- Leadership and Advocacy: Mobilizing political, legal, and financial commitments to support the HIV response.
- **Strategic Information:** Providing up-todate data and analysis to guide evidencebased policies and programs.
- Coordination and Partnerships: Aligning efforts of various stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and the private sector.
- Technical Support: Assisting countries in implementing effective HIV prevention, treatment, and care strategies.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Tracking progress and ensuring accountability in the global HIV response.

Recent Activities

- Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026: UNAIDS launched this strategy aiming to end inequalities driving the AIDS epidemic and to reduce new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths.
- Organizational Transformation: Embarked on an internal transformation focusing on realignment, strategy implementation, and fostering a culture of accountability and inclusivity.
- Global Initiatives: Introduced programs like the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children and the Education Plus initiative to address specific challenges in the HIV response.

Recent News & Initiatives

• Faith Leaders' Engagement: In February

2025, UNAIDS rallied faith leaders at the Vatican to support the HIV response, emphasizing the role of faith-based organizations in combating stigma and discrimination.

• Call for Investment in Prevention: UNAIDS urged countries to increase investments in HIV prevention as a critical step toward ending the AIDS epidemic.

India-Specific Developments

- Youth Leadership in HIV Response: Young people in India have taken active roles in HIV prevention and awareness, with youth-led organizations contributing to a more inclusive and informed society.
- World AIDS Day 2024: UNAIDS India called for collective action to uphold human rights and support those most affected by HIV, advocating for an AIDSfree future.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNAIDS is distinctive as the only cosponsored joint program in the UN system, integrating efforts across multiple agencies to provide a unified response to HIV/AIDS.
- **Similar Organizations:** While organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) address broader health issues, UNAIDS specifically focuses on coordinating the global HIV/AIDS response, leveraging the strengths of its cosponsors.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions:
 - » GS-2 (Governance, Social Justice & International Relations): UPSC has asked about global health initiatives, including efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.
 - » Prelims: Questions on UN bodies and their functions, such as WHO, UNAIDS, and their strategies for controlling



infectious diseases, have been included.

» Mains: Topics on public health policy, India's HIV/AIDS programs, and the role of international organizations in global health governance have appeared in past exams.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established 1994, in operational since 1996.
- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » **Mission:** End the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3 - Good Health & Wellbeina).
- » **Key Reports:** Publishes the Global AIDS Update, which provides data on HIV/ AIDS trends, treatment coverage, and funding needs.
- » India's Role: India has implemented the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), in collaboration with UNAIDS, to reduce HIV prevalence and improve access to treatment.

Global HIV/AIDS Status (2024):

- » Estimated 39 million people living with HIV worldwide.
- » 5.9 million do not have access to treatment.
- » UNAIDS targets: 95-95-95 strategy (95% of people with HIV diagnosed, 95% receiving treatment, 95% achieving viral suppression).

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

Why is UNAIDS Important for UPSC?

- » GS-2 (Governance & International **Relations):** Covers global health policies, India's role in UNAIDS, and international disease control mechanisms.
- » GS-3 (Science & Technology, Public Health): Includes biomedical innovations, epidemiology, and India's strategies for controlling communicable

diseases.

- » Essay Paper: Topics like "The Role of **International Organizations in Global** Health" or "Public Health Challenges in Developing Nations".
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): UNAIDS' work on HIV/AIDS stigma, human rights, and medical ethics provides case studies.

1.1.3.13 UNCTAD

Name of the Organization

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

What it is (Nature and Function

UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body within the United Nations system. It serves as the principal organ of the UN General Assembly dealing with trade, investment, and development issues. Its primary function is to promote the development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy. UNCTAD provides analysis, facilitates consensus-building, and offers technical assistance to help developing countries utilize trade, investment, finance, and technology for inclusive and sustainable development.

Year of Formation

UNCTAD was established in 1964.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1960s, developing countries expressed concerns that existing international economic institutions did not adequately address their specific challenges related to trade and development. To provide a platform for these nations to articulate and address their economic issues, the United Nations General Assembly established UNCTAD in 1964. The goal was to formulate policies on all aspects of development, including trade, aid, transport, finance, and technology, to support developing countries' economic growth and integration into the global economy.



Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- **Number of Members:** UNCTAD comprises 195 member states.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all United Nations member states.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: As a UN body, UNCTAD's membership includes all member states of the United Nations, ensuring a comprehensive representation of both developed and developing countries.
- **Notable Inclusions:** The wide membership allows for diverse perspectives, facilitating discussions that encompass the interests of both developed and developing nations.

India's Membership

• Yes – India is a founding member of UNCTAD (1964) and one of its 195 member states.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNCTAD's key objectives and areas of work include:

- **Policy Analysis:** Conducting research and analysis on global trade, investment, and development issues to provide datadriven policy recommendations.
- **Consensus-Building:** Serving as a forum for intergovernmental deliberations to build consensus on policies affecting international trade and development.
- **Technical Assistance:** Providing technical support to developing countries to

- enhance their capacity in areas such as trade negotiations, investment promotion, debt management, and technology transfer.
- **Advocacy for Development:** Promoting that support sustainable development, inclusive growth, and the integration of developing countries into the global economy.

Recent Activities

- **UNCTAD16 Conference:** Scheduled for October 2025 in Viet Nam, the 16th quadrennial conference will focus on driving economic transformation for a more sustainable future.
- Trade and Development Report 2024: Released in October 2024, this report calls for a fundamental rethink of development strategies amid a global economic slowdown and rising social discontent.
- World Investment Report 2024: Published in mid-2024, the report highlights a 2% decline in global foreign direct investment (FDI) to \$1.3 trillion in 2023, attributing the drop to economic slowdowns and geopolitical tensions.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Call for Sovereign Debt Restructuring** Mechanism: In September 2024, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan advocated for the establishment of a permanent system for restructuring sovereign debt, emphasizing the need for a consistent and reliable approach to address debt distress in developing countries.
- Rebranding Initiative: In 2024, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary, UNCTAD rebranded itself as "UN Trade and **Development"** to reflect its ongoing commitment to promoting trade and development in a changing global landscape.

India-Specific Developments



- **Investment Trends:** According to the World Investment Report 2024, India remained a significant recipient of FDI in 2023, attracting investments in sectors such as digital services and renewable energy.
- **Collaboration on Digital Economy:** UNCTAD has engaged with India on issues related to the digital economy, providing recommendations analysis and harness digital technologies for inclusive development.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UNCTAD distinguishes itself by focusing specifically on the trade and development challenges of developing countries, providing a platform for these nations to voice their concerns and negotiate collectively.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) focus on establishing and enforcing trade rules, UNCTAD emphasizes policy analysis, consensusbuilding, and technical assistance to support development-oriented trade.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:**
 - » GS-2 (Governance & International **Relations):** Questions have covered India's role in global trade, WTO-UNCTAD differences, and trade policies affecting developing countries.
 - » **GS-3 (Economy):** UPSC has asked about foreign direct investment (FDI), trade facilitation, global financial stability, and debt management—topics UNCTAD actively works on.
 - » **Prelims:** Questions related to UN bodies and international economic organizations, including **UNCTAD's** functions, reports, and global trade initiatives, have appeared in previous exams.

» Mains (Essay Paper): Topics "The Role of Trade in Sustainable Development", "Challenges Globalization for Developing Nations", and "India's Position in Global Trade" align with UNCTAD's work.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established in 1964, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
- » **Mission:** To promote trade, investment, sustainable development for developing countries.

» Key Reports:

- □ Trade and Development Report - Provides analysis on global economic trends.
- □ World Investment Report Highlights FDI flows and investment trends.
- □ Digital Economy Report Covers global digital trade and e-commerce policy.
- □ Commodities and Development Report – Focuses on raw materials and developing economies.

» India's Engagement:

- □ UNCTAD regularly monitors India's trade and investment trends, with its reports being used by Indian policymakers.
- □ India is a key FDI destination and is featured prominently in the World Investment Report.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

- Why is UNCTAD Important for UPSC?
 - » GS-2 (International Relations & Global **Trade):** Covers India's engagement with UNCTAD, global trade rules, and international economic cooperation.
 - » GS-3 (Economic **Development):** Includes FDI trends, trade barriers, WTO vs. UNCTAD, and investment-related policies.

- » Essay Paper: Possible topics include "The Role of Trade in Global Development" or "Challenges of Trade Liberalization for Developing Nations".
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): UNCTAD's work on ethical trade, corporate responsibility, and economic justice can be useful for case studies.

1.1.3.14 International Trade Centre (ITC)

Name of the Organization

International Trade Centre (ITC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a multilateralagencydedicatedtofosteringinclusive and sustainable economic development. It assists micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in developing countries to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable development goals. ITC provides trade-related technical assistance. offers market intelligence, and facilitates business connections to enhance international trade opportunities.

Year of Formation

Established in 1964.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1960s, there was a growing recognition that developing countries required support to effectively participate in international trade. Existing institutions did not adequately address the specific challenges faced by these nations. To bridge this gap, the International Trade Centre was established as a joint initiative of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The aim was to provide a dedicated platform for trade-related technical assistance, focusing on enhancing export capabilities of developing countries.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: ITC serves all member countries of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, focusing primarily on developing and least developed countries.
- Criteria for Membership: As a joint subsidiary organ of the UN and WTO, ITC's services are available to all member states of these organizations, with priority given to developing nations.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: ITC's mandate encompasses all UN and WTO member countries, ensuring broad representation.
- **Notable Inclusions:** Emphasis is placed on supporting least developed countries (LDCs) to enhance their trade capacities and integrate into the global economy.

India's Membership

Yes – India participates in ITC (a joint agency of WTO and UNCTAD). (India's involvement comes through its membership in the WTO and UNCTAD, which jointly govern the ITC.)

What it Does (KeyObjectives and Areas of Work)

ITC's primary objectives and areas of work include:

 Trade-Related **Technical Assistance:** Providing training and capacity-building programs enhance export to capabilities of MSMEs in developing countries.

- Market Intelligence: Offering and data to help businesses understand international market trends and opportunities.
- **Business Matchmaking:** Facilitating connections between enterprises developing countries and potential international partners or buyers.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Advising governments on creating conducive trade environments and policies that support sustainable development.
- Sustainable and Inclusive Trade: Promoting trade initiatives that are environmentally sustainable and socially ensurina benefits inclusive, reach marginalized communities.

Recent Activities

- **Deforestation-Free Trade Gateway:** In October 2024, ITC launched an online platform to assist small farmers in developing countries to comply with new EU deforestation regulations, ensuring continued market access.
- **SheTrades Initiative:** Ongoing efforts to empower women entrepreneurs by connecting them to international markets, aiming to integrate more women-owned businesses into global trade.
- **Support for Least Developed Countries** (LDCs): Providing customized assistance to enhance the international competitiveness of MSMEs in LDCs and support their integration into the global economy.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **EU Deforestation Regulations Support:** In response to upcoming EU regulations, ITC's Deforestation-Free Trade Gateway platform aims to simplify compliance for small farmers, ensuring their products meet new standards and maintain access to European markets.
- **Environmental Sustainability Efforts:** Under the leadership Vanessa

Erogbogbo, Chief of the Green and Inclusive Value Chains Section, ITC has intensified its focus on promoting environmentally sustainable trade practices.

India-Specific Developments

- Collaboration with Indian MSMEs: ITC has been working closely with Indian micro, small, and medium enterprises to enhance their export capabilities, providing training and market intelligence to help them access international markets.
- **SheTrades Initiative in India:** Efforts have been made to integrate more Indian women entrepreneurs into global trade networks through the SheTrades initiative, offering them platforms to showcase their products internationally.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** Unlike other international organizations, ITC is uniquely positioned as a joint agency of both the UN and WTO, focusing specifically on the private sector's role in trade development, particularly MSMEs in developing countries.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) focus on establishing global trade rules, ITC emphasizes practical assistance, capacity building, and direct support to businesses to navigate and benefit from these rules.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:**
 - » GS-2 (International Relations **Governance):** Questions on India's role in global trade, WTO-related trade agreements, and trade facilitation for developing nations.
 - » **GS-3 (Economy):** Questions on MSME development, international trade facilitation, and export promotion policies.
 - » **Prelims:** UPSC has asked about global



trade organizations, their mandates, and their impact on developing countries. ITC's work is directly linked to India's MSME sector, which is frequently covered in government initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India, and Startup India.

» Mains (Essay Paper): Topics like "The Role of MSMEs in Global Trade", "Empowering Developing Nations through Trade", and "Women-Led **Businesses in International Markets**" align with ITC's mission.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established in 1964, as a joint initiative of GATT (now WTO) and UNCTAD.
- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » **Mission:** To enhance the trade capacities of developing countries, particularly MSMEs, to integrate into the global economy.

» Key Reports:

- □ SME Competitiveness Outlook
- Focuses on how MSMEs can improve trade and access international markets.
 - □ Trade Market Intelligence Tools
- ITC provides global trade data tools like Trade Map, Market Access Map, and Investment Map to help businesses and policymakers.

» India's Engagement:

- □ ITC has actively supported India's MSMEs in increasing exports and market access.
- □ India has used ITC's **Trade Market Intelligence** platforms to analyze global trade opportunities and enhance export diversification.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

- Why is ITC Important for UPSC?
 - » GS-2 (International Trade & Relations): Covers India's engagement in global trade, WTO policies, and trade facilitation

for MSMEs.

- » GS-3 (Economic **Development):** Includes trade and investment promotion, digital economy, and MSMEled export growth.
- » Essay Paper: Possible topics include "Trade as a Tool for Development" or "The Role of MSMEs in Global Trade".
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): ITC's work on sustainable trade, ethical business practices, and digital trade facilitation can provide case study examples.

1.1.3.15 UNOPS

Name of the Organization

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

What it is (Nature and Function)

UNOPS is a self-financing entity within the United Nations system that specializes in humanitarian, development, implementing and peacebuilding projects. It offers services infrastructure, procurement, management, financial management, and human resources, aiming to help people build better lives and assist countries in achieving peace and sustainable development.

Year of Formation

UNOPS was established in December 1973 as part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and became an independent, self-financing organization in January 1995.

Why they formed it?

Initially formed to provide operational assistance for UNDP projects, UNOPS evolved to meet the growing demand for a dedicated entity capable of managing complex development projects. Its independence in 1995 allowed it to offer specialized services across the UN system and to various partners, enhancing efficiency and

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effectiveness in project implementation.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark

Members

- **Number of Members:** As a UN entity, UNOPS serves all 193 member states of the United Nations.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to all sovereign states recognized by the UN General Assembly.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: UNOPS operates universally, providing services to all UN member states based on their development needs and requests.
- Notable Inclusions: UNOPS often works in post-disaster settings, conflict zones, and developing countries, addressing critical infrastructure and development challenges.

India's Membership

Yes – India is represented on the UNDP/ UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board (hence helps oversee UNOPS).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNOPS focuses on:

- Infrastructure: Designing, constructing, and rehabilitating infrastructure projects such as roads, schools, and health clinics.
- **Procurement:** goods Acquiring services to support project implementation, ensuring transparency and value for money.

- **Project Management:** Overseeing project lifecycles from planning to completion, ensuring objectives are met efficiently.
- Financial **Management:** Providing financial oversight and management services to ensure accountability and effective use of resources.
- Human Resources: Recruiting and managing personnel for various projects and initiatives.

Recent Activities

- COVID-19 Response: Between 2020 and mid-2022, UNOPS committed to delivering COVID-19 response projects worth over \$1.5 billion across 90 countries, focusing on health procurement and infrastructure.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Collaborated with the University of Oxford and the UN Environment Programme to produce the "Infrastructure for Climate Action" report, emphasizing the role of sustainable infrastructure in addressing climate change.
- Organizational Reforms: ln 2022, following internal investigations into financial mismanagement, UNOPS underwent leadership changes and initiated reforms to enhance transparency and accountability.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Leadership Changes:** In April 2023, Jorge Moreira da Silva was appointed as the Executive Director of UNOPS, bringing renewed focus on organizational integrity and efficiency.
- Santiago Network Secretariat: During COP28 in 2023, UNOPS, in partnership with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, was selected to co-host the secretariat for the Santiago Network, aiming to support developing countries in managing climaterelated losses and damages.

India-Specific Developments



While specific projects in India within the last two years are not detailed in the provided sources, UNOPS has a history of engagement in the country, particularly in areas like infrastructure development and capacity building. For the most current information on UNOPS activities in India, it is advisable to consult official UNOPS reports or their regional office.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNOPS is distinct within the UN system due to its self-financing model and exclusive focus on project implementation, offering specialized services in infrastructure and procurement.
- **Similar Organizations:** While agencies like UNDP focus on development planning and advocacy, UNOPS specializes in the execution and management of projects, often in challenging environments.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Questions have addressed the roles of various UN agencies in global development and humanitarian assistance, including the operational functions of entities like UNOPS.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Mission: To help people build better lives and assist countries in achieving peace and sustainable development.
 - » Core Services: Infrastructure, procurement, project management, financial management, and human resources.
 - » Operational Reach: Active in over 80 countries, delivering projects worth approximately \$3 billion annually.
 - » Self-Financing Model: Operates on a fee-for-service basis, ensuring efficiency and accountability in project delivery.

1.1.3.16 United Nations Volunteers

Name of the Organization

• United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is a UN organization that contributes to peace and development worldwide through volunteerism. It mobilizes volunteers to support UN agencies, governments, and community initiatives, advocating for the recognition of volunteers as essential partners in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Year of Formation

• Established on December 7, 1970.

Why they formed it?

In the late 1960s, there was a growing recognition of the potential impact of volunteerism in addressing global development challenges. The UN General Assembly established UNV to harness this potential, aiming to promote peace and development through the integration of skilled volunteers into various initiatives.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Bonn, Germany

Members

- **Number of Members:** UNV operates in over 160 countries, engaging more than 12,000 volunteers annually.
- Criteria for Membership: Individuals aged 18 and above can become UN Volunteers. There is no upper age limit. Volunteers are selected based on their qualifications, experience, and the specific needs of assignments.

Who are its members?



- Basis of Selection: Volunteers are chosen based on their skills, experience, and the requirements of the host organization or community. UNV emphasizes diversity, inclusivity, and the representation of volunteers from various backgrounds and nationalities.
- **Notable Inclusions:** UNV engages volunteers from approximately 180 nationalities, reflecting a broad spectrum of cultural and professional backgrounds.

India's Membership

Yes - India contributes to UNV. (UNV is managed by UNDP; India supports it through UNDP and by contributing Indian volunteers to UN missions.)

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNV's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Mobilizing **Volunteers:** Deploying skilled volunteers to support agencies, governments, and civil society organizations in various development and peacekeeping initiatives.
- **Advocacy:** Promoting the value of volunteerism as a means to achieve the SDGs and fostering an environment that encourages voluntary action.
- Capacity **Building:** the Enhancing capacities of local communities and organizations through training and knowledge sharing.
- **Online Volunteering:** Facilitating virtual volunteer opportunities, enabling individuals to contribute remotely to development projects worldwide.

Recent Activities

- **COVID-19 Response:** UN Volunteers have been instrumental in supporting health systems, disseminating information, and assisting in vaccination campaigns during the pandemic.
- State of the World's Volunteerism

Report 2022: Released in December 2021, this report highlights how volunteerism can foster collaborative relationships and decision-making, contributing to more equal and inclusive societies.

International Volunteer **Celebrations:** Annually on December 5th, UNV leads global campaigns to recognize and promote the contributions of volunteers to peace and development.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Support in Crisis Situations: UNV has expressed readiness to support UN partners in emergency responses, such as the humanitarian crisis in the State of Palestine, by mobilizing volunteers to assist affected populations.
- Online Volunteering Expansion: With the increasing demand for remote collaboration, UNV has expanded its Online Volunteering service, enabling more individuals to contribute to development projects virtually.

India-Specific Developments

While specific recent activities in India are not detailed in the provided sources, UNV has historically been active in the country, engaging volunteers in various development projects. For the most current information on UNV's initiatives in India, it is advisable to consult official UNV reports or their regional office.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: UNV is distinct in its exclusive focus on promoting volunteerism within the UN system, offering both on-site and online opportunities for individuals to contribute to global peace and development efforts.
- Similar **Organizations:** While organizations like the Peace Corps (USA) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) also deploy volunteers internationally, UNV operates within the UN framework, providing a unique platform for volunteers to engage in UN-led initiatives.

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Relevance to UPSC Exam

 Past UPSC Questions: Examinations have included questions on international organizations and their roles in global development, where understanding UNV's contributions could be pertinent.

- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Mission: To contribute to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide.
 - » Headquarters: Bonn, Germany.
 - » **Establishment**: December 7, 1970.
 - » Areas of Focus: Mobilizing volunteers, advocacy for volunteerism, capacity building, and facilitating online volunteering.
 - » Global Presence: Active in over 160 countries, engaging more than 12,000 volunteers annually.

1.1.4 UN Commissions and Related Organizations

UN commissions and The related organizations are specialized bodies that focus on specific policy areas such as trade, economic development, nuclear security, human rights, and regional cooperation. These commissions help set international standards, conduct research, and guide policymaking within their respective areas. Unlike UN programs that work directly in crisis situations, commissions focus on long-term strategies and international agreements. Some commissions work within specific regions to promote economic growth and stability, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and** the Pacific (ESCAP), and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Others deal with global issues like **nuclear energy** regulation, led by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and chemical weapons prohibition, overseen by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) focuses on global trade policies, while the World Trade Organization (WTO), although not a UN agency, is closely linked to its system and plays a key role in regulating international trade. These commissions and organizations work with governments, private institutions, and scientific communities to develop solutions for global challenges and influence international policies through research and recommendations.

1.1.4.1 UNECA or ECA

Name of the Organization

 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA or ECA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is one of the five regional commissions under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Its primary function is to promote the economic and social development of its member states, foster intra-regional integration, and encourage international cooperation for Africa's development.

Year of Formation

ECA was established in 1958.

Why they formed it?

In the post-colonial era of the late 1950s, African nations faced significant challenges in achieving economic independence and development. Recognizing the need for a coordinated approach to address these challenges, the United Nations established ECA to encourage economic cooperation among African countries and to support their development efforts.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization



Status

Active

Headquarters

Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Members

- Number of Members: 54 member states
- Full List of Members: All 54 countries within the African continent
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to all United Nations member states located on the African continent.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership includes all African UN member states, promoting inclusivity and comprehensive regional representation.
- **Notable Inclusions:** All recognized sovereign states within Africa are members.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (UNECA's 54 members are African states).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

ECA's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Economic and Social Development: Assisting member states in formulating policies for sustainable economic growth and social progress.
- **Regional Integration:** Promoting trade and economic integration among African countries to create a unified continental market.
- Policy Research and **Analysis:** Conducting research to inform evidencebased policymaking on issues such as industrialization, natural resource management, and macroeconomic policy.
- Advocacy and Advisory **Services:**

Providing platforms for dialogue and offering technical assistance to member states on development initiatives.

Recent Activities

- Leadership Appointment: On October 6, 2023, Claver Gatete of Rwanda was appointed as the Executive Secretary of ECA, succeeding Vera Songwe.
- Climate Change Advocacy: ECA has been actively involved in highlighting the economic impacts of climate change on Africa, noting that global warming could cost African nations up to 5% of their GDP.
- Support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): ECA has played a pivotal role in advocating for and supporting the implementation of AfCFTA, aiming to boost intra-African trade and economic integration.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Climate Finance Mobilization: ECA has been instrumental in calling for increased climate finance to support African nations in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts.
- **Digital Transformation:** The commission is promoting digitalization as a means to accelerate economic growth and improve public service delivery across the continent.

India-Specific Developments

While ECA primarily focuses on African nations, it collaborates with international partners, including India, on various development projects. Specific recent collaborations between ECA and India are not detailed in the provided sources.

Comparison with other Orgs

• Unique Aspects: ECA is uniquely positioned as the only UN regional commission dedicated exclusively to Africa, addressing the continent's specific economic and social challenges.

Similar **Organizations:** Comparable entities include the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), both of which also focus on Africa's development but differ in scope and function.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

UPSC **Ouestions:** Past **Ouestions** have been asked about international organizations and their roles in regional development, where understanding ECA's functions could be pertinent.

Key Facts to Remember:

» Establishment: 1958

» **Headquarters:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

» **Membership:** 54 African countries

» Current Executive Secretary: Claver Gatete (appointed in 2023)

Economic » Primary **Objectives:** development, regional integration, policy research, and advocacy

Understanding ECA's provides insights into Africa's economic landscape and the collaborative efforts aimed at fostering development on the continent.

1.1.4.2 UNESCAP or ESCAP

Name of the Organization

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

What it is (Nature and Function)

ESCAP is one of the five regional commissions under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It serves as the regional hub promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP provides a platform for member states to discuss and address economic and social issues, facilitates policy dialogue, and offers technical assistance

and capacity-building to its members.

Year of Formation

Established on 28 March 1947.

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, there was a pressing need for economic reconstruction and development in Asia and the Far East. To address these challenges, the United Nations established the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) in 1947, aiming to facilitate concerted action for economic reconstruction and development in the region. In 1974, recognizing the broader social dimensions of development, ECAFE was renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Bangkok, Thailand

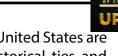
Members

- Number of Members: 53 member states and 9 associate members
- Full List of Members: Includes countries from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, such as Afghanistan, Australia, China, France, India, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States, among others.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as countries with historical or administrative ties to the region.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership primarily based on geographic location within the Asia-Pacific region. However, countries like France, the Netherlands, the

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United Kingdom, and the United States are members due to their historical ties and territories in the region.

Notable Inclusions: The inclusion of non-Asian countries underscores the diverse and interconnected nature of the region's economic and social dynamics.

India's Membership

• Yes – India is a founding member (joined ESCAP in March 1947) and one of 53 member states.

What it Does (Key Objectives)

ESCAP's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Promoting Sustainable Development: Assisting member states in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through policy advice, research, and capacity-building.
- Facilitating Regional **Economic** Integration: Enhancing trade, investment, connectivity among member countries to foster economic growth.
- Addressing Social Development Issues: Tackling challenges such as poverty, inequality, and social inclusion.
- Disaster Risk Reduction Management: Supporting countries in building resilience to natural disasters and climate change impacts.
- Statistical Data and Analysis: Providing reliable data and analysis to inform policymaking and track progress on development goals.

Recent Activities

- COVID-19 Response: ESCAP has been actively involved in supporting member states to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, offering policy advice and facilitating regional cooperation.
- **Annual Commission Sessions: ESCAP**

holds annual sessions where member states convene to discuss pressing regional issues and adopt resolutions to guide the commission's work.

• **Publications:** Regular release of reports such as the "Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report" and the "Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment **Report,"** providing insights into regional development trends.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Sustainable **Development** Goals **Progress:** ESCAP continues to monitor and report on the progress of SDGs in the region, identifying areas where accelerated efforts are needed.
- **Digital and Green Economies:** Initiatives promoting digital transformation and green growth have been launched to support post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development.

India-Specific Developments

- South and South-West Asia Office: Located in New Delhi, India, this subregional office focuses on promoting inclusive and sustainable development in South and South-West Asian countries, including India.
- **Projects:** ESCAP Collaborative partnered with Indian institutions on various projects related to trade facilitation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** ESCAP is the most comprehensive of the UN's regional commissions, covering a region that is home to two-thirds of the world's population.
- **Similar Organizations:** Other regional commissions include the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), each focusing



on their respective regions but sharing the common goal of promoting economic and social development.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » GS-2 (Governance & International Relations): Questions have covered India's role in regional economic ESCAP's trade cooperation, sustainable development initiatives, and South-South cooperation.
- » GS-3 (Economic Development & **Environment):** UPSC has included questions related to regional economic integration, disaster risk management, and climate change policies in the Asia-Pacific.
- » Prelims: Ouestions have focused on regional commissions of the UN, includina ESCAP's mandate functions.
- » Mains (Essay Paper): Topics like "Regional Economic Cooperation and its Role in Sustainable Development", "Climate Resilience in the Asia-Pacific", and "The Role of Regional **Commissions in Achieving SDGs"** align with ESCAP's work.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: Established on March 28. 1947 as ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East), later renamed ESCAP in 1974.
- » **Headquarters:** Bangkok, Thailand.
- » Membership: 53 member states and 9 associate members, including non-Asian countries with historical ties to the region.
- » Mission: Promote economic and social development, regional trade, connectivity, and climate resilience in the Asia-Pacific.
- » Key Reports:

- □ Asia-Pacific Trade and **Investment Report** – Covers trade trends, investment flows, and policy recommendations.
- ☐ Asia-Pacific Sustainable **Development Report** – Assesses SDG progress in the region.
- □ Disaster Resilience Reports -Focuses on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

» India's Engagement:

- ☐ ESCAP's South and South-West Asia Office in **New Delhi** plays a critical role in supporting regional development initiatives.
- □ India is a key participant in ESCAP's trade, disaster management, and digital economy programs.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exams

Why is ESCAP Important for UPSC?

- » GS-2 (International Organizations & **Trade Relations):** Covers India's role in regional economic cooperation, ESCAP's initiatives for South Asian countries, and trade facilitation.
- » GS-3 (Economic Development & **Environment):** Includes regional trade agreements, infrastructure development, and climate resilience policies.
- » **Essay Paper:** Possible topics include "The Role of Regional Cooperation in Achieving SDGs" or "Economic Growth vs. Environmental Sustainability in the Asia-Pacific".
- » Ethics Paper (GS-4): ESCAP's work on sustainable development, disaster resilience, and economic justice can be used as case studies.

1.1.4.3 UNECE

Name of the Organization

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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

What it is (Nature and Function

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, established to promote economic integration and cooperation among its member states. UNECE provides a platform for policy dialogue, the development of international norms and standards, and the exchange of best practices across various sectors, including transport, trade, environment, statistics, energy, and more.

Year of Formation

UNECE was established on March 28, 1947, by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, Europe faced significant economic devastation. There was a pressing need for coordinated efforts to facilitate reconstruction economic and strengthen economic relations among European countries and with the rest of the world. To address these challenges, ECOSOC established UNECE to initiate and participate in measures aimed at economic reconstruction and integration in Europe.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 56 member states
- FullListofMembers: UNECE's membership includes countries from Europe, as well as transcontinental Eurasian countries and nations from North America. Notable members include all European Union

- countries, the United States, Canada, Israel, Turkey, Russia, and Central Asian republics such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to countries within the European region and those with economic ties or interests in Europe.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership primarily based on geographic location in Europe and economic connections to the region.
- **Notable Inclusions:** The inclusion of countries like the United States, Canada, and Israel highlights UNECE's commitment to broader economic integration beyond the European continent.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (UNECE's members are primarily European/North American countries).

What it Does (Key Objectives)

UNECE's key objectives and areas of work include:

- Economic Integration: Promoting pan-European economic integration through policy dialogue and the development of international norms and standards.
- **Transport:** Facilitating the development of efficient, safe, and sustainable transport systems.
- **Trade:** Enhancing international trade by reducing barriers and harmonizing standards.
- **Environment:** Addressing environmental challenges and promoting
- sustainable resource management. Statistics: Providing reliable statistical data to inform policy decisions.
- **Energy:** Promoting sustainable energy policies and practices.

- Housing Land Management: and Improving housing standards and land administration.
- **Timber:** Forestry and Sustainable management of forest resources.
- Innovation and **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encouraging innovation and effective collaboration between public and private sectors.

Recent Activities

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Support:** UNECE has focused on assisting member states in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through concrete activities across its subprogrammes.
- **Environmental Performance Reviews:** Conducting assessments to evaluate countries' progress in environmental policies and sustainable development.
- Resource Management Initiatives: Development of the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS) to provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable resource management.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Circular Economy Promotion: UNECE has been actively developing guidelines and frameworks to support the transition to a circular economy, aiming to enhance resource efficiency and sustainability.
- **Energy Efficiency Standards:** Initiatives to establish and promote standards for energy efficiency in buildings and industries to reduce environmental impact.

India-Specific Developments

As UNECE primarily focuses on the European region, there are limited direct collaborations with India. However, India may engage with UNECE through multilateral platforms or adopt UNECE standards and best practices in areas like transport, trade, and environmental policies.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** UNECE distinguishes itself by developing a wide array of international norms and standards that facilitate cross-border cooperation and economic integration in the European region.
- **Similar Organizations:** Other UN regional commissions, such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), serve similar functions in their respective regions but focus on different geographic areas.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:**
 - » GS-2 (International Organizations **& Global Governance):** Questions have covered India's trade relations, international transport agreements, and global sustainability initiatives—areas where UNECE plays a crucial role.
 - » GS-3 (Economic Development **Environment):** UNECE's work energy efficiency, climate policies, and trade facilitation aligns with India's infrastructure and environmental goals.
 - » **Prelims:** Ouestions have been asked on UN agencies, international trade standards, and regional economic commissions. where UNECE's contributions are significant.
 - » Mains (Essay Paper): Topics such as "The Role of Regional Commissions in Economic Integration" or "The of **Importance** International Standards in Trade and Transport" align with UNECE's functions.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Formation: Established on March 28. 1947, by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
 - » Headquarters: Palais des Nations,



Geneva, Switzerland.

- » Membership: 56 member states, including European countries, the US, Canada, and Central Asian nations.
- » **Mission:** Promote regional economic cooperation, sustainable development, and policy harmonization across Europe and Eurasia.

» Key Reports:

- □ UNECE **Environmental** Performance Reviews – Assess countries' progress in environmental policy and sustainable development.
- **UNECE Transport Reports** Cover international transport agreements, trade corridors, and infrastructure development.
- □ UNECE **Sustainable** Energy **Reports** – Provide insights on energy efficiency, renewables, and carbon emissions policies.

» India's Role:

- India is not a member of UNECE, but it follows some UNECE standards for vehicle safety, trade, and environmental sustainability.
- □ UNECE standards influence global trade regulations, which impact India's exports to European markets.

Final Takeaway for UPSC Exam

- Why is UNECE Important for UPSC?
 - » GS-2 (International Relations Trade Governance): Covers India's role in global trade, standard-setting in transport and energy, and international agreements.
 - » GS-3 (Economic Development & Sustainability): **Environmental** Includes global energy policies, climate agreements, and sustainable trade facilitation.
 - » **Essay Paper:** Possible topics include "The Role of International Standards in Global Trade" or "Economic

Cooperation Through Regional Commissions".

» Ethics Paper (GS-4): UNECE's focus on environmental responsibility, corporate sustainability, and ethical business standards can provide case study examples.

1.1.4.4 ECLAC

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is a United Nations regional commission dedicated to promoting economic cooperation and development among its member states in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Name of the Organization

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ECLAC is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, focusing

- Conducting research and analysis on economic and social issues
- Providing technical assistance to member countries
- Formulating and promoting development policies
- Facilitating regional cooperation and integration

Year of Formation

Established in 1948

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, there was a recognized need to:

- Rebuild and develop economies in Latin America
- Enhance regional cooperation





• Address social inequalities

ECLAC was formed to address these challenges by providing a platform for economic collaboration and policy formulation.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Santiago, Chile

Members

- **Number of Members:** 46 member states and 14 associate members
- **Member States Include:** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, among others
- Associate Members Include: Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, among others

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is open to Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as nations from other regions with economic ties to Latin America and the Caribbean.
- **Notable Inclusions:** Non-Latin American countries like Germany, Japan, and the Republic of Korea are members, reflecting their economic interests in the region.

India's Membership

• **No** – India is not a member (ECLAC includes Latin American/Caribbean states plus a few others, but not India).

What it does (Key Objectives)

ECLAC's key objectives and areas of work include:

 Economic Development: Promoting sustainable economic growth and reducing poverty.

- **Social Development:** Addressing issues like inequality, education, and health.
- **Environmental** Sustainability: Advocating for policies that balance economic growth with environmental protection.
- Statistical Research: Collecting and analyzing data to inform policy decisions.

Recent Activities

- **2024:** Hosted the 40th session in Lima, focusing on sustainable development and economic integration.
- **2022:** Held the 39th session in Buenos Aires, discussing post-pandemic recovery strategies.
- **2022:** Appointment of José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs as Executive Secretary.
- **2021:** Facilitated the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement, emphasizing environmental rights and protection.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Economic Projections:** In December 2024, ECLAC projected a 2.2% growth for the region in 2024 and 2.4% in 2025, driven primarily by domestic consumption.
- **Gender Violence:** In November 2024, ECLAC called for urgent action to prevent and eliminate gender-based violence, highlighting that at least 11 women are victims of femicide daily in the region.

India-Specific Developments

• Strengthening Relations: ECLAC has been exploring opportunities to enhance economic and trade relations between India and Latin America and the Caribbean, focusing on sectors like Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) and e-commerce.

Comparison with other Orgs

• **Unique Aspects:** ECLAC combines economic analysis with social and

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environmental considerations, offering a holistic approach to development.

Similar Organizations: Other UN regional commissions include the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Unlike these, ECLAC has a strong focus on structural economic analysis and has been influential in developing theories like dependency theory.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: While specific questions on ECLAC are rare, understanding its role is crucial for topics on international regional organizations, economic groupings, and global development policies.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Established in 1948 as a UN regional commission
- » Headquartered in Santiago, Chile.
- » Focuses on economic, social, and environmental development in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- » Engages in research, policy formulation, and technical assistance.

Understanding ECLAC's functions and initiatives provides insights into regional development dynamics and international cooperation mechanisms, which are pertinent for the UPSC examination.

1.1.4.5 ESCWA

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is a United Nations regional commission dedicated to promoting economic and social development in the Western Asia region through regional and subregional cooperation and integration.

Name of the Organization

Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia (ESCWA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ESCWA is one of five regional commissions under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It aims to stimulate economic activity, strengthen cooperation among member countries, and promote sustainable development. ESCWA provides a platform for formulating and harmonizing sectoral policies, initiating data collection, and coordinating activities for development.

Year of Formation

• Established on August 9, 1973.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1970s, Western Asian countries recognized the need for a dedicated platform to address their unique economic and social challenges. The establishment of ESCWA aimed to facilitate concerted action for economic reconstruction and development in the region, succeeding the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB).

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Beirut, Lebanon.

Member

- Number of Members: 21 member states.
- Full List of Members: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership is open to



countries in the Western Asia region.

- **Notable Inclusions:** The State of Palestine is a full member since its declaration of independence in 1988.
- **Notable Exclusions:** Comoros and Djibouti, despite being Arab states, are not members of ESCWA.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (ESCWA's 21 members are Arab states in West Asia/ North Africa).

What it does (Key Objectives)

ESCWA's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Economic **Development: Promoting** sustainable economic growth and integration among member states.
- **Social Development:** Addressing social issues such as poverty, education, and gender equality.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Advocating for policies that balance economic development with environmental protection.
- **Data and Statistics:** Providing support capacity-building for national systems in official statistics and ensuring coordination between various actors involved in statistical activities in the region.

Recent Activities

2025:

- » **January:** Released a joint report with UNCTAD titled "Syria at the **Crossroads,"** warning of potential economic collapse in Syria and outlining pathways to stability.
- » January: Published a report indicating that Kuwait could save more than a quarter of its budget through improved efficiency in social spending.

2024:

- » **December:** Held the 9th Executive Committee meeting and the 12th **Technical Cooperation Network meeting** to discuss regional cooperation.
- » **December:** Launched the ENACT reports focusing on emerging technology and innovation for Arab public institutions.

2023:

» **February:** Organized the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, focusing on opportunities for recovery efforts to accelerate SDG progress and strengthen social inclusion.

2022:

» December: **Published** report highlighting that political and economic crises are hindering growth in the Arab region until 2026.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Syria's Economic Outlook: In January 2025, ESCWA, in collaboration with UNCTAD, released a report titled "Syria at the Crossroads," warning of potential economic collapse in Syria and outlining pathways to stability.
- Kuwait's Social Spending Efficiency: A January 2025 report indicated that Kuwait could save more than a quarter of its budget through improved efficiency in social spending.
- **ENACT** Project: **ESCWA** launched the ENACT project to support Arab governments in deploying emerging technologies and incorporating innovative practices to enhance public sector operations and services.

India-Specific Developments

There are no significant developments or direct collaborations between ESCWA and India reported in the past two years.

Comparison with other Orgs





Unique Aspects:

- » Regional Focus: ESCWA exclusively serves Western Asia and Arab nations, addressing region-specific challenges.
- » Integrated Development Approach: It combines economic, social, and environmental policies to promote sustainable growth.
- » Arab-Specific Policies: Unlike other UN regional commissions, ESCWA gives special attention to Arab integration, conflict recovery, and resource management.

Similar Organizations:

- » ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean): Focuses on economic cooperation in Latin America, similar in its research and policy formulation approach.
- » ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific): Serves a broader region with economic and social development goals but includes Asian economies beyond Arab nations.
- » ECA (Economic Commission for Africa): Works on economic development in Africa, much like ESCWA does for Western Asia.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » While ESCWA has not been a direct UPSC question, UN regional commissions (such as ECLAC and ESCAP) have been mentioned in questions related to international organizations.
- » Questions on Arabeconomic integration, sustainable development goals, and UN agencies often relate to ESCWA's work.

Key Facts to Remember:

» Established: 1973 under ECOSOC.

» **Headquarters:** Beirut, Lebanon.

- » Members: 21 Arab countries.
- » Focus Areas: Economic and social development, Arab regional integration, sustainable growth, and statistics.
- » **Current Relevance:** Syria's economic crisis, Arab Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and regional digital transformation strategies.

Understanding ESCWA is crucial for exams preparing for international organizations under General Studies (GS-II) and topics related to economic development, regional cooperation, and the Arab world's geopolitical dynamics.

1.1.4.6 International Atomic **Energy Agency**

The International Atomic Energy Agency autonomous international (IAEA) organization that promotes the peaceful use of nuclear energy and aims to prevent its use for military purposes, including nuclear weapons.

Name of the Organization

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The IAEA serves as the global center for cooperation in the nuclear field, working to:

- Promote safe, secure, and peaceful nuclear technologies
- Establish international safety standards
- Conduct inspections to ensure compliance with nuclear non-proliferation agreements
- Provide technical assistance and foster research in nuclear science and technology

Year of Formation

• Established on July 29, 1957.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II and the





advent of nuclear technology, there was a pressing need to:

- Promote peaceful applications of nuclear
- Prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons
- Provide a platform for international cooperation and oversight in the nuclear domain

The IAEA was formed to address these challenges, ensuring that nuclear energy serves humanity's welfare without contributing to military conflicts.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Vienna, Austria.

Members

- **Number of Members:** As of February 2025, the IAEA comprises 176 member states.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any state, whether a member of the United Nations or not, that desires to collaborate in the agency's mission and accepts its obligations.

Who are its members?

- **Basis** of **Selection:** Membership is voluntary and based on a state's commitment to the IAEA's objectives and compliance with its statutes.
- Notable Inclusions: Nations from all continents, including major nuclear powers and non-nuclear states, reflecting a broad consensus on the importance of nuclear safety and non-proliferation.
- **Notable Exclusions:** Some countries have

chosen not to join or have observer status due to political or strategic reasons.

India's Membership

Yes – India has been a member since the IAEA's founding in 1957. (India is a founding member and has continuously served on the *IAEA Board of Governors.*)

What it does (Key Objectives)

The IAEA's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- **Nuclear Verification and Safeguards:** Monitoring nuclear programs to ensure materials are not diverted for military purposes.
- **Safety and Security:** Establishing safety standards and providing guidance to protect people and the environment from harmful radiation.
- **Science and Technology:** Promoting the peaceful application of nuclear science in areas like medicine, agriculture, and energy.
- **Technical Cooperation:** Assisting member states in developing nuclear infrastructure and capabilities.

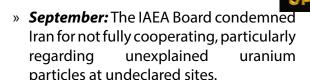
Recent Activities

2025:

- » February: IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi warned that time is running out to revive the Iran nuclear deal, as Tehran accelerates uranium enrichment close to weapons-grade levels.
- » **January:** Registration opened for the ConvEx-3 exercise, scheduled for June 2025 in Romania, simulating a severe nuclear emergency to test global preparedness.

2024:

» **November:** Iran agreed to keep uranium enrichment below weapons-grade levels, aiming to prevent renewed sanctions.



2023:

- » **August:** The IAEA began annual monitoring of seawater near Fukushima, Japan, ensuring the safe release of treated wastewater from the damaged nuclear plant.
- » April: Released nuclear power data indicating a pivotal moment for clean energy technologies, emphasizing the need for accelerated deployment.

12. Recent News & Initiatives

- Iran Nuclear Deal: Ongoing efforts to monitor and negotiate terms with Iran regarding its nuclear program, with recent agreements to limit uranium enrichment levels.
- Fukushima Wastewater **Monitoring:** Continuous assessment of Japan's release of treated nuclear wastewater, ensuring compliance with safety standards.
- Global Emergency **Preparedness:** Organizing international exercises like ConvEx-3 to enhance readiness for potential nuclear emergencies.

India-Specific Developments

- **Nuclear Energy Expansion:** In April 2023, India announced plans to increase its nuclear power capacity from 6,780 MWe to 22,480 MWe by 2031, aiming for nuclear energy to constitute nearly 9% of its electricity by 2047.
- **Budget Allocation:** The Union Budget 2025-26 outlined a significant push towards nuclear energy, setting ambitious target of 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047 as part of India's energy transition strategy.
- International **Collaboration:** India continues to engage with the IAEA for technical cooperation and adherence to

safety standards, reflecting its commitment to peaceful nuclear energy use.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects:

- » Independent yet UN-Linked: The IAEA is an autonomous international organization but reports to the UN General Assembly and Security Council.
- » Nuclear Safeguards Role: Unlike other nuclear-related agencies, the IAEA has a legally binding verification and monitoring role under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- » **Dual Mandate:** It promotes peaceful nuclear energy use while also working on nuclear non-proliferation.

• Similar Organizations:

- » Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG): A voluntary export control regime regulating nuclear trade, unlike the IAEA, which focuses on inspections and compliance.
- » Comprehensive **Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO):** Works on banning nuclear tests, while the IAEA ensures peaceful nuclear use.
- » International Energy Agency (IEA): Focuses on energy policies and research but does not have the regulatory oversight role that the IAEA has in nuclear energy.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions:

- » The IAEA and nuclear treaties have been mentioned in UPSC Prelims and GS Paper-II (International Relations).
- » Questions related to India's nuclear policy, NPT, and international nuclear governance often require knowledge of the IAEA.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**



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» Established: 1957, under the UN framework.

» Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.

» **Members:** 176 as of 2025.

- » Key Functions: Nuclear safety, security, safeguards, and technical cooperation.
- » India's Position: India is a member but not a signatory to the NPT, which affects its relationship with the IAEA in terms of safeguards.
- » Current Relevance: Iran nuclear deal, India's expansion of nuclear energy, and the Fukushima wastewater issue.

Conclusion:

The IAEA remains one of the most significant international organizations concerning nuclear energy, security, and non-proliferation. Understanding its role is crucial for UPSC exams preparing for international relations, energy security, and India's foreign policy.

1.1.4.7 International Organization for Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a leading intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.

Name of the Organization

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

What it is (Nature and Function)

IOM is the principal intergovernmental organization in the field of migration, working closely with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental partners. It is committed to ensuring the orderly and humane management of migration, promoting international cooperation on migration issues, assisting in the search for practical solutions to migration challenges, and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced

Year of Formation

• Established on December 6, 1951.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, Europe faced a significant displacement crisis, with millions uprooted from their homes. To address this, the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) was formed to coordinate the resettlement of displaced persons. This entity evolved into the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) and later, in 1989, was renamed the International Organization for Migration, reflecting its expanded global mandate.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

 Number of Members: As of 2024, IOM comprises 175 member states and 8 observer states.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is open to sovereign states that recognize the need for international cooperation in the field of migration and are willing to align with IOM's principles and objectives.
- **Notable Inclusions:** IOM's membership spans countries from all continents, reflecting its global reach and the universal relevance of migration issues.

India's Membership

• Yes – India became a member of the IOM (now a UN related org) in 2008, after



holding observer status since 1991.

What it does (Key Objectives)

IOM's primary objectives and areas of work include:

- Migration **Management: Assisting** governments in developing policies and programs that facilitate orderly and humane migration.
- **Emergency Response:** Providing rapid humanitarian assistance to migrants affected by crises, including natural disasters and conflicts.
- Resettlement and Integration: Facilitating the resettlement of refugees and supporting their integration into new communities.
- Migration Health: Ensuring migrants have access to essential health services and promoting public health initiatives.
- **Counter-Trafficking:** Combating human trafficking through prevention, protection, and prosecution initiatives.
- Migration Research and Data: Conducting research to inform evidencebased migration policies and maintaining comprehensive migration data.

Recent Activities

2025:

» **February:** IOM reported the discovery of mass graves in Libya containing migrant bodies with gunshot wounds, highlighting ongoing migrant vulnerabilities in the region.

2024:

- » October: Reported over 14 million people displaced in Sudan due to internal conflicts, emphasizing the urgent need for international assistance.
- » August: Called for increased global support to address Sudan's displacement crisis, warning of potential loss of life without immediate action.

» May: Released the "World Migration **Report 2024,"** providing comprehensive analysis of global migration trends and issues.

2023:

» **December:** Launched the PRAYAS project in India, aiming to promote regular and assisted migration for youth and skilled professionals.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Haiti Displacement Crisis: In December 2024, IOM reported that over 1 million people in Haiti have been internally displaced, primarily due to escalating gang violence, marking a threefold increase from the previous year.
- **Eastern Migration Route Challenges:** Highlighted the dangers faced by migrants on the "eastern corridor" from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, with many succumbing to harsh conditions and violence.

India-Specific Developments

- PRAYAS Project Launch: In December 2023, IOM India initiated the PRAYAS project to facilitate regular and assisted migration for Indian youth and skilled professionals, aiming to map international migration trends and strengthen support systems for prospective migrants.
- **Migrant Support Centre Collaboration:** Partnered with Shahi Exports in December 2022 to establish a Migrant Support Centre, providing resources and assistance to migrant workers, ensuring safe and informed migration processes.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:**
 - » Comprehensive Migration Unlike UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), which focuses solely on refugees, IOM deals with all types of migration, including



labor migration, forced displacement, and irregular migration.

- » Operational Flexibility: IOM operates as both a humanitarian and development agency, ensuring immediate crisis response and long-term migration governance support.
- » Partnership with UN: Initially independent, IOM officially became a related agency of the United Nations in 2016, strengthening its role in global migration governance.

• Similar Organizations:

- » UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): Focuses exclusively on refugees and stateless persons, while IOM works with all migrants, including economic migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- » ILO (International Labour Organization): Works on migrant labor rights and employment policies but does not provide direct humanitarian assistance like IOM.
- » International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): Provides humanitarian aid in conflict zones, including for displaced populations, but does not engage in migration policy or governance.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions:

- » Migration and refugee issues have been part of UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International Relations, GS-III: Internal Security & Social Issues).
- » Questions on Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and IOM's role in migration governance have been indirectly asked in relation to India's migration policies.

• Key Facts to Remember:

» **Established:** 1951, initially as a post-WWII refugee resettlement organization.

- » **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- » Members: 175 as of 2024. Key Functions: Migration management, humanitarian assistance, labor migration, counter-trafficking, and policy research.
- » India's Position: India is a member and collaborates with IOM on migration governance, especially for labor migration and diaspora engagement.
- » Current Relevance: Growing migration challenges due to climate change, conflicts (Sudan, Ukraine, Myanmar), and labor migration trends, making IOM highly relevant for global affairs.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) plays a pivotal role in global migration governance, addressing both forced displacement and voluntary migration. For UPSC exams, understanding IOM is essential for international relations, refugee policies, labor migration issues, and humanitarian assistance topics in GS-II & GS-III.

1.1.4.8 OPCW

Name of the Organization

 Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The OPCW is an intergovernmental organization responsible for implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Its primary functions include:

- **Verification:** Ensuring the destruction of existing chemical weapons and monitoring compliance through inspections.
- **Assistance and Protection:** Providing support to member states against chemical threats.
- **International Cooperation:** Promoting peaceful use of chemistry and facilitating capacity-building initiatives.



Year of Formation

Established on April 29, 1997.

Why they formed it?

The OPCW was formed to enforce the Chemical Weapons Convention, which aims to eliminate chemical weapons globally. The use of chemical weapons in conflicts like World War I and subsequent instances underscored the necessity for a dedicated body to oversee disarmament and prevent future use.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

• Active.

Headquarters

The Hague, Netherlands.

Members

- **Number of Members:** As of February 2025, the OPCW comprises 193 member states.
- Criteria for Membership: Open to all sovereign states willing to adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention's provisions.

Who are its members?

- **Universal Participation: OPCW** The near-universal membership, indicating a global consensus against chemical weapons.
- **Notable Inclusions:** Major chemical weapon possessors and states from all continents are members, reflecting widespread commitment to chemical disarmament.

India's Membership

Yes – India is a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It signed in 1993 and ratified in 1996, with the Convention

entering into force for India on 29 April 1997. (India has also served on the OPCW Executive Council.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Chemical Weapons **Destruction:** Overseeing and verifying the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles.
- Non-Proliferation: Monitoring chemical industries to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
- Assistance and Protection: Offering training and support to member states to protect against chemical threats.
- International Cooperation: Encouraging the peaceful application of chemistry for economic and technological development.

Recent Activities

- 2025:
 - » February: The OPCW issued confirming the report presence of the toxic chemical 2-Chlorobenzylidenemalononitrile (CS) in Ukraine, related to alleged incidents in the Dnipropetrovsk region in October 2024.
 - » *February:* Director-General received Estonia's Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss advancing chemical nonproliferation and efforts to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program.

2024:

- » **December:** Monaco contributed €20,000 to support OPCW activities.
- » **November:** The Director-General met with Russia's Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade to discuss chemical safety and security.
- » October: OPCW issued a report on a technical assistance visit to Ukraine following an alleged incident involving toxic chemicals.
- 2023:







» January: The OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team released a report attributing responsibility for the 2018 Douma chemical attack in Syria to the Syrian Armed Forces.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Syria's Chemical Weapons: In December 2024, following the fall of President Bashar al-Assad, the OPCW emphasized the opportunity to eliminate Syria's remaining chemical weapons stockpiles.
- Ukraine Conflict: Reports in late 2024 indicated the use of chemical agents, including teargas, by Russian forces in Ukraine, leading to international condemnation and calls for investigation.

India-Specific Developments

- **Active Participation:** India continues to engage actively with the OPCW, contributing to discussions on chemical safety and security.
- Capacity Building: Collaborated with the OPCW in organizing workshops and training programs to enhance national capabilities in chemical emergency response.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects:

- » **Exclusive Focus:** The OPCW is solely dedicated to the eradication of chemical weapons, unlike broader disarmament organizations.
- » Verification Mechanism: Possesses a robust inspection and verification regime to ensure compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

• Similar Organizations:

- » International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): Focuses on nuclear materials, whereas the OPCW concentrates on chemical weapons.
- » Comprehensive **Nuclear-Test-Ban**

Treaty Organization (CTBTO): Monitors nuclear test bans, differing from the OPCW's chemical weapons mandate.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » UPSC has asked about the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and its enforcement mechanisms.
- » Questions related to arms control treaties, non-proliferation, and India's disarmament policies often include references to the OPCW.
- » Mains GS-II (International Relations) has seen guestions related to India's stance on global disarmament initiatives, including chemical and biological weapons.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Established:** 1997, under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).
- » **Headquarters:** The Hague, Netherlands.
- » **Members:** 193 states, making it one of the most universally accepted arms control organizations.
- » Main Functions: Eliminating chemical weapons, preventing their emergence, and promoting peaceful chemical industry use.

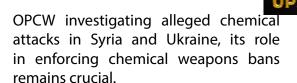
» India's Role:

- » India ratified the CWC in 1996 and is a founding member of the OPCW.
- » India declared and destroyed its chemical weapons stockpile in compliance with the CWC.
- provided technical » India has assistance and expertise to the OPCW in training and capacitybuilding programs.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

» Global Security Threats: With the





- » India's Strategic Interests: As a major player in global disarmament efforts, India's engagement with the OPCW is significant for India's foreign policy and international commitments.
- » Chemical Industry Oversight: Given India's large chemical manufacturing sector, compliance with the CWC is essential to maintaining international trade partnerships.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is a critical institution in global arms control, ensuring chemical weapons are eliminated and prevented from reemerging. For UPSC exams, understanding the OPCW's role, India's participation, and recent global developments is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Internal Security, Science & Technology).

1.1.4.9 CTBTO Preparatory **Commission**

Name of the Organization

Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO **Preparatory** Commission).

What it is (Nature and Function)

The CTBTO Preparatory Commission is an international organization established to prepare for the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Its primary functions include:

- Verification Regime **Development:** Establishing a global system to monitor compliance with the CTBT, ensuring no nuclear explosions occur.
- **Promoting Universality:** Encouraging all countries to sign and ratify the CTBT to

achieve its entry into force.

Year of Formation

Established on 19 November 1996.

Why they formed it?

The CTBTO Preparatory Commission was formed in response to global concerns over nuclear weapons testing. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996 to ban all nuclear explosions. To ensure the treaty's effective implementation upon its entry into force, the Preparatory Commission was established to build the necessary verification infrastructure and promote universal adherence.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria.

Members

- Number of Members: As of 2024, the **CTBTO Preparatory Commission comprises** 187 member states.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to all states that have signed the CTBT.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Any state that signs the CTBT becomes a member of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.
- **Notable Exclusions:** Key nuclear-capable states such as India, Pakistan, and North Korea have not signed the CTBT, impacting the treaty's entry into force.

India's Membership





No – India is not a member. (India has not signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, so it is not among the CTBTO PrepCom's 187 member states.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **International Monitoring System (IMS):** Establishing a global network of 337 facilities to detect nuclear explosions.
- International **Data** Centre (IDC): Collecting and analyzing data from the IMS to identify potential nuclear tests.
- On-Site Inspections (OSI): Developing capabilities to conduct inspections in areas suspected of nuclear testing.
- Capacity Building: Assisting member states in enhancing their capabilities to comply with and benefit from the CTBT's verification regime.

Recent Activities

2025:

» **October:** Scheduled the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Preparatory Commission to discuss advancements in the verification regime and strategies for promoting the CTBT's entry into force.

2024:

- » November: The United States emphasized the need for adequate financial resources to support the long-term sustainability of the CTBTO's verification systems.
- » **September:** Somalia became the 187th member state by signing the CTBT.

2023:

» *March:* Papua New Guinea ratified the CTBT, bringing the total number of ratifications to 178.

Recent News & Initiatives

Youth Engagement: The CTBTO Youth Group, launched in 2016, has expanded its membership to over 1,200 young

- professionals and students, fostering a new generation of advocates for the CTBT.
- **Technological Enhancements:** Continuous upgrades to the International Monitoring System have improved the detection capabilities for nuclear tests and other seismic events.

India-Specific Developments

- Non-Signatory Status: India remains a non-signatory to the CTBT, citing concerns over the treaty's discriminatory nature and its potential impact on national security.
- **Engagement:** Despite not signing the CTBT, India participates in discussions related to nuclear disarmament and has maintained a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing since 1998.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects:

- » **Preparatory Nature:** Unlike other international organizations, the CTBTO Preparatory Commission operates in anticipation of the CTBT's entry into force, focusing on building the necessary verification infrastructure.
- » Comprehensive Verification Regime: The organization is establishing an extensive monitoring system that hydroacoustic, includes seismic, radionuclide infrasound, and technologies detect nuclear to explosions worldwide.

Similar Organizations:

- » International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): While both organizations aim to prevent nuclear proliferation, the IAEA focuses on monitoring nuclear materials and facilities, whereas the CTBTO Preparatory Commission concentrates on detecting nuclear tests.
- » Organisation for the Prohibition of **Chemical Weapons (OPCW):** Both organizations work towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction, but the



OPCW deals with chemical weapons, **CTBTO Preparatory** whereas the Commission addresses nuclear test bans.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » Questions have been asked about the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and India's position on nuclear disarmament.
- » UPSC Mains GS-II (International Relations) has included discussions on global arms control treaties, where the CTBT and its verification mechanisms are relevant
- » UPSC Prelims has featured questions on international organizations related to non-proliferation, including the IAEA, OPCW, and CTBTO.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Established: 1996 under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) framework.
- » Headquarters: Vienna, Austria.
- 178 » Members: 187 signatories; ratifications as of 2024.
- » India's Position: India has not signed or ratified the CTBT, citing concerns over the treaty's discriminatory nature and lack of commitment from nuclear states to complete disarmament.
- » Verification System: The International Monitoring System (IMS), developed by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, is one of the most advanced global networks for detecting nuclear tests.
- » Current Relevance: Ongoing concerns over North Korea's nuclear program, the US-China arms race, and India's nonsignatory status make this topic crucial for international relations discussions.

CTBTO Preparatory Commission plays a critical role in global nuclear nonproliferation efforts, focusing on nuclear test monitoring and treaty verification. While the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force, the organization continues to refine its global verification regime.

For UPSC exams, understanding the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, India's nuclear policy, and the broader non-proliferation framework is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Science & Technology, Security Issues).

1.1.4.10 World Trade **Organization (WTO)**

Name of the Organization

• World Trade Organization (WTO)

What it is (Nature and Function

WTO is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations. It provides a framework for negotiating trade agreements, resolving trade disputes, and enforcing adherence to established trade rules.

Year of Formation

The WTO was established on January 1, 1995.

Why they formed it?

Prior to the WTO, international trade was governed by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) since 1948. However, GATT had limitations, particularly in addressing trade in services and intellectual property. The rapid globalization and increasing complexity of trade required a more comprehensive and robust institution, leading to the creation of the WTO during the Uruguay Round negotiations (1986-1994).

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status



Active

Headquarters

William Centre Rappard, Geneva, **Switzerland**

Members

- **Number of Members:** As of February 2025, the WTO comprises 166 member countries, representing over 98% of global trade and GDP.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any state or customs territory with full autonomy over its trade policies. Prospective members undergo a negotiation process to ensure compliance with WTO rules and commitments.

Who are its members?

- Universal Representation: The WTO's extensive membership underscores its role as a central platform for global trade governance.
- Notable Inclusions: Major economies, including the United States, China, the European Union, and India, are members, highlighting the organization's global reach.
- Notable Exclusions: Some countries and territories remain non-members, often due to political reasons or ongoing accession negotiations.

India's Membership

Yes – India has been a WTO member since its inception on 1 January 1995 (and was part of GATT since 1948).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Trade Negotiations:** Facilitates multilateral trade negotiations to reduce trade barriers and establish fair trade rules.
- **Dispute Settlement:** Provides a structured process for resolving trade disputes between member countries.

- **Trade Policy Monitoring:** Regularly reviews national trade policies to ensure transparency and compliance with WTO agreements.
- **Building:** Offers technical Capacity assistance and training to developing countries to enhance their capabilities.

11. Recent Activities

2025:

- » January: China initiated a WTO dispute complaint regarding U.S. tariff measures, reflecting ongoing trade tensions between major economies.
- » January: The WTO and the World Customs Organization (WCO) signed an agreement to enhance cooperation on trade and customs matters, aiming to streamline global trade processes.

2024:

- » December: The WTO-International Trade Centre (ITC) initiative for women received a record-high pledge from the FIFA World Cup Legacy Fund, supporting women's participation in global trade.
- » **December:** Sweden committed SEK 30 million to support safe agriculture trade in developing countries, emphasizing the WTO's role in promoting food security.
- » **September:** The WTO and the World Bank launched the "Trade in Services for **Development"** initiative, focusing on enhancing service trade in developing nations.

2023:

» **December:** The WTO introduced a new e-Learning platform aimed at enhancing the learning experience for users, reflecting the organization's commitment to capacity building.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Leadership: In December 2024, Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was granted a second four-year term. She emphasized the importance of the WTO amidst global trade tensions and expressed readiness to
- **Upcoming Conference:** The next WTO Ministerial Conference is scheduled for March 26-29, 2026, in Cameroon. This event will bring together trade ministers from around the world to negotiate new trade rules and updates.

collaborate with all member nations.

Trade Disputes: In January 2025, China initiated a WTO dispute complaint regarding U.S. tariff measures, highlighting ongoing trade tensions between major economies.

India-Specific Developments

- Trade Policy Review: In 2024, the WTO conducted a Trade Policy Review of India, assessing its trade policies and practices. The review highlighted India's economic growth and trade diversification, while also noting areas for improvement, such as reducing trade barriers and enhancing regulatory transparency.
- Fisheries Subsidies Agreement: India played a significant role in the negotiations leading to the historic agreement on fisheries subsidies during the 2022 Ministerial Conference. The agreement aims to prohibit harmful subsidies that contribute to overfishing, aligning with India's commitment to sustainable fishing practices.

Comparison with other Orgs

Scope of Work:

- » Unlike organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank, which focus on financial stability and development financing respectively, the WTO specifically addresses trade rules and policies.
- » The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) focuses on

trade and development issues but lacks the WTO's enforcement mechanisms.

Binding Dispute Resolution:

- WTO's » The Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) is unique as it provides a legally binding resolution process for trade disputes, unlike UNCTAD, which primarily offers policy guidance.
- » The WTO's dispute resolution system is often compared to regional trade agreements (RTAs) like NAFTA/USMCA and the European Union, but it has a broader multilateral scope.

Global vs. Regional Approach:

» Regional trade blocs like the European Union (EU), ASEAN, and MERCOSUR focus on regional economic integration, whereas the WTO sets global trade rules that apply to all members.

Non-Tariff Measures & Standards:

» Unlike organizations focused on tariff reduction alone, WTO agreements regulate non-tariff barriers, such as technical standards, intellectual property rights (TRIPS), and services trade (GATS).

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- The WTO and its agreements have been covered in UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International Relations & GS-III: Indian Economy).
- **Example questions from UPSC:**
 - » "Whatarethemajoragreementsunder the WTO? Explain their significance for developing economies like India."
 - » "What is the WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism, and how does it function?"
 - » "Discuss the impact of WTO agreements like TRIPS and GATS on India's economy."



Key Facts to Remember:

- **Established:** January 1, 1995, replacing GATT (1948).
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **Members:** 166 as of 2025 (over 98% of global trade).

• Key Agreements:

- » GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) – Trade in goods.
- » GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) – Trade in services.
- TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) – Intellectual property protection.
- » AoA (Agreement on Agriculture) –
 Agricultural trade regulations.
- » TFA (Trade Facilitation Agreement) Reducing trade barriers and customs efficiency.

• India's Position in WTO:

- » Advocates for Developing Countries: India plays a leading role in negotiations on agriculture, food security, and trade rules.
- » Opposes E-Commerce Rules Imposed by Developed Nations: India resisted global e-commerce regulations, citing concerns over data sovereignty.
- » WTO Disputes: India has been involved in multiple trade disputes with the US, EU, and China, including issues related to pharmaceutical patents, agricultural subsidies, and digital trade.

• Current Relevance for UPSC:

- » Global Trade Wars: The WTO is central to ongoing US-China trade tensions and disputes over intellectual property and subsidies.
- » Developing Countries' Interests: The WTO remains important for India's fight against unfair trade practices, especially regarding subsidies and market access.

» Upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in 2026: Key policy shifts may affect India's trade and economic policies.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) plays a crucial role in global trade governance, ensuring fair, rule-based trade. It is highly relevant for UPSC exams preparing for **GS-II** (International Relations) and **GS-III** (Indian Economy).

1.2 Other Political Forums and Governance Institutions

Apart from the UN, many other organizations and forums exist where countries discuss and coordinate policies on global issues. These groups are not formal governing bodies but play a significant role in world politics and economic policymaking.

Major political and economic forums include **G7** (**Group of Seven**) and **G20** (**Group of Twenty**), where the world's largest economies discuss financial and trade policies. **BRICS** (**Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**) is another influential group focusing on economic and development cooperation among emerging economies. The **Non-Aligned Movement** (**NAM**), which was formed during the Cold War, represents developing countries that do not formally align with any major power bloc. Similarly, the **Group of 77** (**G77**) is a coalition of developing nations working together on economic and trade issues.

There are also institutions that influence global governance without being formal governing bodies. The OECD (Organisation for **Economic Co-operation and Development)** economic policies for industrialized nations, while the Commonwealth of Nations is an association of former British colonies working together on trade and cultural ties. **OIC** (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) represents Muslim-majority countries and works on issues affecting the Islamic world. Securityrelated forums like NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and SCO (Shanghai Cooperation



Organisation) focus on regional stability and defense cooperation.

1.2.1 Group of Seven (G7)

Name of the Organization

• Group of Seven (G7)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The G7 is an informal forum comprising seven of the world's advanced economies. It facilitates discussions and coordination on global economic policies, political challenges, and pressing international issues.

Year of Formation

• Established in 1975.

Why they formed it?

The G7 was formed in response to significant economic upheavals in the early 1970s, notably the OPEC oil embargo and the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system. These events underscored the necessity for a platform where leading industrialized nations could collaboratively address global economic challenges.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

The G7 does not have a permanent headquarters or secretariat. Instead, its presidency rotates annually among member countries, with the presiding nation hosting summits and setting the agenda for that year.

Members

Number of Members: Seven countries

Full List of Members: Canada, France,

Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States.

Additional Participation: The European Union is also represented at all meetings by the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is based on the economic prowess and global influence of the countries.
- **Notable Inclusions:** The inclusion of the European Union, represented by its key leaders, underscores the EU's significant role in global economic and political affairs.
- **Notable Exclusions:** Russia was a member (expanding the group to the G8) from 1998 until its suspension in 2014 following the annexation of Crimea. Emerging economies like China and India are not members, though they are occasionally invited as guests to participate in discussions.

India's Membership

No - India is not a G7 member. (It is occasionally invited as a quest to G7 summits, but it's not part of the seven-nation group.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Economic Policy Coordination:** Discusses and aligns on macroeconomic policies to promote global economic stability and growth.
- Political and Security Issues: Addresses international security concerns, including geopolitical tensions and conflicts.
- Global Challenges: Collaborates on solutions to pressing issues such as climate change, health pandemics, and sustainable development.
- Development **Assistance:** Commits to supporting developing countries through aid, debt relief, and infrastructure investment.



Recent Activities

2023:

» May: The 49th G7 Summit was held in Hiroshima, Japan. Key discussions included the Russian invasion of Ukraine, global economic resilience, and engagement with emerging economies. Leaders from countries like India, Brazil, and Indonesia were invited to foster broader international collaboration.

2022:

» June: The 48th G7 Summit took place at Schloss Elmau, Germany. The agenda focused on the Ukraine conflict, global food security, and strategies for sustainable energy transitions.

2021:

» June: The 47th G7 Summit was convened in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, UK. Leaders reached a provisional agreement on implementing a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15%, aiming to address tax avoidance by multinational corporations.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Support for Ukraine: In response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, the G7 has imposed coordinated sanctions on Russia and pledged ongoing support for Ukraine, including financial aid and military assistance.
- Climate Initiatives: The G7 has committed to ambitious climate goals, including achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and supporting developing countries in their energy transitions through financial and technical assistance.

India-Specific Developments

G7 Summit Participation: India has been consistently invited to G7 summits as a guest nation. In 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Hiroshima Summit, engaging in discussions on global health, climate change, and economic

resilience.

Bridging Global **Divides:** India's participation underscores its role as a bridge between the G7 and the Global South, advocating for the interests of developing nations and promoting inclusive global governance.

Comparison with other Orgs

G7 vs. BRICS:

» Membership:

- □ The G7 consists of seven of the world's most advanced economies.
- □ BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) represents major emerging economies.

» Perspective:

- ☐ G7 countries promote Western economic policies, democracy, and freemarket capitalism.
- □ BRICS focuses on multilateralism, reforming global financial institutions, addressing the interests developing nations.

» Global Influence:

- ☐ The G7 dominates global financial and trade systems.
- BRICS has increased its influence in global finance, particularly through initiatives like the New Development Bank (NDB).

» G7 vs. OECD:

- ☐ The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), like the G7, consists of advanced economies but is a larger group with 38 members.
- □ OECD focuses on economic analysis, policy recommendations, and development, while G7 has a broader geopolitical agenda.
- » G7 vs. UN Bodies (IMF, World Bank, WTO):

- □ While the G7 influences international financial institutions, it does not directly govern them.
- ☐ The IMF, World Bank, and WTO are formal institutions with global membership, whereas the G7 is an informal group without legal obligations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

• The G7 and its impact on global economic governance have been covered in UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International Relations, GS-III: Economy).

• Example Questions from UPSC:

- » "Discuss the role of the G7 in shaping global economic policies. How does its influence compare to the G20?"
- » "What are the major global challenges discussed at recent G7 Summits? How do they impact India?"
- » "Compare and contrast the G7 and BRICS in terms of their objectives, membership, and global influence."

Kev Facts to Remember:

- Established: 1975, originally as the G6 (Canada joined in 1976, making it the G7).
- Headquarters: No permanent headquarters; presidency rotates annually.
- Members: Seven countries (USA, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan) + EU representation.

Key Focus Areas:

- » Economic policies, global trade, financial stability.
- » Climate change, energy security, and digital transformation.
- » Geopolitical conflicts and international security.

• India's Engagement:

» Invited as a guest country to multiple G7 Summits, playing a bridging role

between the G7 and the Global South.

» Discusses climate financing, food security, global health, and digital governance.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

- Impact on Global Trade & Economy: G7 nations collectively influence trade policies, currency valuation, and economic sanctions.
- **Geopolitical Issues:** The Ukraine war, Taiwan conflict, China's economic policies, and their impact on India's foreign policy.
- **Upcoming G7 Summits:** The 2024 G7 Summit in Italy and the 2025 Summit in Canada will focus on AI regulation, supply chain resilience, and global security.

Conclusion

The G7 remains one of the most influential global forums, shaping economic, political, and strategic policies. While it is not as inclusive as the G20, its decisions impact international trade. security, and economic growth.

For UPSC exams, understanding the G7's objectives, India's engagement, and comparison with other global groups is crucial for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Economy & Security Issues).

1.2.2 Group of Twenty (G20)

Name of the Organization

• Group of Twenty (G20)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The G20 is an international forum that brings together the world's major economies, both developed and developing, to discuss and coordinate on global economic and financial issues. It serves as a platform for addressing pressing international challenges, including trade, investment, climate change, and sustainable development.



Year of Formation

Established in 1999.

Why they formed it?

The G20 was formed in response to the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, which highlighted the need for a more inclusive platform that encompassed both industrialized and emerging economies to discuss and coordinate on international economic and financial stability.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarter

The G20 does not have a permanent secretariat or headquarters. Instead, the presidency rotates annually among its members, with the presiding country hosting the summit and setting the agenda for that year.

Members

- **Number of Members: 20**
- Full List of Members: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, European Union.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is based on a country's significance in the global economy, considering factors like GDP, population, and overall economic influence.

Who are its members?

- **Inclusivity:** The G20 includes both developed and emerging economies, representing а diverse perspectives on global economic issues.
- **Notable Inclusions:** The European Union

- participates as a single entity, in addition to its member states that are individually part of the G20.
- Notable Exclusions: While the G20 encompasses major economies, some countries with significant influence or economic size, such as Nigeria and Iran, are not members.

India's Membership

Yes – India is a founding member of the G20 (an original participant since 1999) and plays a major role (India held the G20 Presidency in 2023).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Economic Policy Coordination:** Facilitates discussions to promote international financial stability sustainable and economic growth.
- Financial Regulation: Works towards enhancing the regulation of financial markets to prevent crises.
- Trade and Investment: Addresses barriers to international trade and promotes open markets.
- **Development:** Focuses on reducing global inequality and supporting development in low-income countries.
- **Climate Change and Energy:** Collaborates on initiatives to combat climate change and promote sustainable energy solutions.

Recent Activities

- 2023:
 - » September: The 18th G20 Summit was held in New Delhi, India. Key outcomes included the adoption of the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, emphasizing sustainable development, climate action, and the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member.
- 2022:
 - » **November:** The 17th G20 Summit took





place in Bali, Indonesia. Discussions centered on global health architecture, digital transformation, and sustainable energy transitions.

2021:

» October: The 16th G20 Summit was convened in Rome, Italy. Leaders addressed the global economy, health, climate change, and sustainable development.

2020:

» November: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 15th G20 Summit was held virtually under Saudi Arabia's presidency. The focus was on coordinating a global response to the pandemic and ensuring equitable access to vaccines.

12. Recent News & Initiatives

- Inclusion of the African Union: In 2023. under India's presidency, the African Union was admitted as a permanent member of the G20, marking a significant step towards greater representation of the Global South.
- Global Biofuel Alliance: The 2023 summit saw the launch of the Global Biofuel Alliance, aiming to promote the development and adoption of sustainable biofuels.
- India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor: A joint agreement was reached to establish a rail and shipping corridor linking India with the Middle East and Europe, enhancing trade and connectivity.

India-Specific Developments

G20 Presidency (2023):

- » India held the G20 presidency in 2023 and hosted the 18th G20 Summit in New Delhi on September 9-10.
- » The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration was unanimously adopted, focusing on sustainable development, digital infrastructure, climate action, international trade.

Inclusion of the African Union:

» India played a key role in advocating for the African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member, which was formalized at the 2023 Summit.

Global Biofuel Alliance:

» India launched the Global Biofuel Alliance, a major initiative to develop and promote sustainable biofuels, in collaboration with countries like the USA and Brazil.

• India-Middle East-Europe Economic **Corridor (IMEC):**

- » At the G20 Summit 2023, India, the US, and the EU announced the IMEC, a new trade corridor linking India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- » This is expected to boost trade connectivity, energy cooperation, and digital infrastructure.

Regulation of Cryptocurrencies:

» India prioritized discussions cryptocurrency regulations. global emphasizing financial stability and consumer protection.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):

» India showcased its success in digital governance (e.g., Aadhaar, UPI. CoWIN) as a model for global digital transformation.

Climate Commitments:

» India supported global climate finance mechanisms while advocating differentiated responsibilities for developed and developing nations.

Comparison with other Orgs

G20 vs. G7:

- » G20 includes emerging economies (India, China, Brazil) while the G7 consists of only developed nations.
- » G7 focuses on geopolitics and Western





alliances, whereas G20 emphasizes economic and financial stability globally.

G20 vs. BRICS:

- » G20 includes both developed and developing nations, whereas BRICS represents only major emerging economies.
- » BRICS aims to challenge Western financial dominance, while the G20 seeks inclusive global economic governance.

G20 vs. WTO/IMF/World Bank:

- » The G20 does not create binding agreements like the WTO (trade rules), IMF (monetary policy), or World Bank (development finance).
- » Instead, the G20 sets the global economic agenda and influences international institutions.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Ouestions:

UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International Relations, GS-III: Economy) have featured G20-related questions.

• Example UPSC Questions:

- » "How does the G20 differ from the G7? Discuss its significance for emerging economies like India."
- » "Analyze India's role in shaping global economic governance through the G20."
- » "What are the key outcomes of the G20 Summit 2023? How do they impact India's foreign policy?"

Key Facts to Remember:

- Established: 1999 (Finance Ministers' Meeting) and upgraded to Leaders' Summit in 2008.
- Headquarters: No HO: permanent Presidency rotates annually.
- **Members:** 20 (19 countries + European Union).

Key Agreements:

- » New Delhi Declaration (2023) Sustainable growth, digital public infrastructure, global trade reforms.
- » Bali Declaration (2022) Post-COVID recovery, food security, debt relief for developing nations.

India's Role:

- » Hosted G20 Summit 2023, introduced Global Biofuel Alliance, IMEC, Digital Public Infrastructure framework.
- » Advocated Global South for representation, African Union membership, financial inclusion.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

- Global Financial Stability: G20 shapes IMF, World Bank, WTO policies.
- **Climate & Energy:** India's stance on climate finance and net-zero commitments.
- Geopolitical Influence: **US-China** tensions, Ukraine war, sanctions, global trade.
- **Digital Economy:** India's push for global digital public infrastructure models.

The G20 is a crucial platform for global economic coordination, bringing together both developed and developing nations. India's role as a key G20 member is significant, especially after hosting the 2023 Summit.

For UPSC exams, understanding the G20's structure, objectives, India's contributions, and major summits is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Economy & Global Trade).

1.2.3 BRICS

Name of the Organization

BRICS

What it is (Nature and Function)

BRICS is an intergovernmental organization



comprising major emerging economies. It serves as a platform for cooperation and dialogue on economic, political, and cultural matters, aiming to reform global financial institutions and enhance the influence of its member countries in international affairs.

Year of Formation

The BRICS grouping was formalized in 2009.

Why they formed it?

The term "BRIC" was coined in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill to describe the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, which were anticipated to play significant roles in global economic growth. Recognizing their growing economic influence, these countries began formal diplomatic engagements, leading to the first BRIC summit in 2009. The primary motivation was to create a platform that could advocate for the reform of international financial institutions and address issues pertinent to developing economies.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

BRICS does not have a permanent headquarters. The chairmanship rotates annually among its members, and the hosting country organizes the summit and related meetings for that year.

Members

- **Number of Members:** 10 (+1 may occur)
- Full List of **Members:** Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia. Saudi Arabia may become the next member, although it is not yet confirmed. Look out for this news.

Criteria for Membership: Membership is extended to emerging economies that demonstrate significant regional influence and a commitment to fostering cooperation among developing countries.

Who are its members?

- **Expansion:** Since its inception, BRICS has expanded to include additional emerging economies, reflecting its commitment to representing a broader spectrum of the Global South.
- Notable Inclusions: The inclusion of countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia signifies BRICS's intent to enhance its geopolitical and economic influence.
- Potential Candidates: Several countries. including Turkey, have expressed interest in joining BRICS, indicating the organization's growing appeal as a counterbalance to Western-dominated institutions.

India's Membership

Yes – India is one of the five BRICS countries (joined the grouping at its start in 2009).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Economic Cooperation:** Promotes trade and investment among member countries to stimulate economic growth.
- Financial Reform: Advocates for the reform of global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank to better represent the interests of emerging economies.
- Development **Initiatives:** Through the New Development Bank, BRICS finances infrastructure and sustainable development projects member in countries and other developing nations.
- **Political Collaboration:** Seeks to enhance the voice of emerging economies in global governance and promote a multipolar world order.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Encourages people-





to-people exchanges to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.

Recent Activities

2023:

» August: The 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Key outcomes included the decision to expand membership by inviting Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates to join the bloc.

2024:

» October: The 16th BRICS Summit took place in Kazan, Russia. Discussions focused on deepening economic ties, enhancing cooperation in technology and innovation, and addressing global challenges such as climate change.

2025:

» July: Brazil is set to host the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The agenda is expected to emphasize global governance reforms and strengthening South-South cooperation.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Expansion Efforts:** BRICS has been actively expanding its membership to include more emerging economies, aiming to amplify the voices of the Global South in international forums.
- **Alternative Payment Systems:** Member countries have discussed developing alternative payment systems to reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar, promoting financial sovereignty among member states.
- **Infrastructure Development:** The New Development Bank has continued to fund infrastructure projects in member countries, focusing on sustainable development and economic resilience.

India-Specific Developments

Strategic Engagement: India views BRICS

as a platform to enhance its economic outreach, particularly in the Middle East, leveraging the bloc's expansion to access new markets and investment opportunities.

- Balancing Act: While engaging with BRICS, India maintains its strategic autonomy, ensuring that its participation aligns with national interests and contributes to a balanced multipolar world order.
- **Development Financing:** India has utilized the New Development Bank to finance key domestic infrastructure projects, facilitating economic growth and development.

Comparison with other Orgs

BRICS vs. G7:

- » Membership: **BRICS** comprises emerging economies from diverse regions, whereas the G7 includes advanced industrialized nations.
- » **Objectives:** BRICS focuses on reforming alobal financial institutions promoting multipolarity, while the G7 emphasizes maintaining the existing international order.

BRICS vs. G20:

» Scope:

☐ The G20 includes both developed and developing economies, while BRICS focuses specifically on emerging markets.

» Decision-Making:

- ☐ G20 discussions are consensusdriven, with influence from Western economies like the US and EU.
- multipolarity BRICS promotes and South-South cooperation, often challenging Western-led global financial institutions.

» Institutional Mechanisms:

☐ G20 does not have a development bank, while BRICS established the New Development Bank (NDB) to finance



infrastructure projects.

BRICS vs. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation **Organization):**

» Focus Areas:

- □ BRICS emphasizes economic cooperation, trade, and financial reforms.
- □ SCO is more focused on regional security, counterterrorism, and economic cooperation in Central Asia.

» Membership:

☐ BRICS has a global representation (Latin America, Africa, Asia, Middle East), while SCO is Eurasia-centric (China, Russia, Central Asia, India, Pakistan, Iran).

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International Relations) have frequently covered BRICS.
- **Example UPSC Questions:**
 - » "How does BRICS challenge the existing global financial order? Discuss the role of the New **Development Bank."**
 - » "Compare BRICS and G7 in terms of their objectives, membership, and global influence."
 - » "Analyze India's role in BRICS and how it aligns with its foreign policy goals."

Key Facts to Remember:

- Established: 2009 (as BRIC); South Africa joined in 2010, making it BRICS.
- **Headquarters:** No permanent HQ; the presidency rotates annually.
- Members: 10 (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, UAE, Indonesia).
- **Key Institutions:**
 - » New Development Bank (NDB): Provides infrastructure financing.
 - » BRICS **Contingent** Reserve

Arrangement (CRA): Financial safety net to manage global economic crises.

Major Summits:

- » 2023 Johannesburg **Summit:** Expanded BRICS membership.
- » 2024 Kazan Summit: Strengthened economic and trade cooperation.
- » 2025 Rio de Janeiro Summit (**Upcoming**): Expected to focus on trade de-dollarization and South-South partnerships.

India's Role in BRICS:

- » Advocates for economic reforms and fair global governance.
- » Uses BRICS to balance China's influence and expand trade ties with Africa & the Middle East.
- » Secured NDB funding for infrastructure projects in India.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

- Global Power Shifts: The expansion of BRICS and its potential to counterbalance Western-dominated institutions (IMF, World Bank, G7, WTO).
- Trade & Finance: BRICS initiatives like trade in local currencies, alternatives to the SWIFT system, and de-dollarization.
- **India's Diplomacy:** How India balances BRICS membership while engaging with Western alliances like QUAD and G20.
- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Russia-Ukraine war, US-China rivalry, Middle East conflicts—all impact BRICS' global positioning.

Conclusion

BRICS has evolved from an economic concept to a major geopolitical force, aiming to reform globalfinancialinstitutions, promote multipolarity, South-South cooperation. and strengthen

For UPSC exams, understanding BRICS' objectives, India's engagement, and its comparison with G7, G20, and SCO is essential for GS-II (International



Relations) and GS-III (Global Economy & Trade).

1.2.4 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

Name of the Organization

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an international organization comprising countries that do not formally align themselves with any major power bloc. Its primary function is to represent the interests and aspirations of developing nations, promoting principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and noninterference in domestic affairs. NAM serves as a platform for member states to collaborate on political, economic, and social issues, aiming to ensure their voices are heard in global decisionmaking processes.

Year of Formation

NAM was established in 1961 during the Cold War era.

Why they formed it?

In the backdrop of the Cold War, newly independent nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America sought to avoid entanglement in the ideological conflict between the Western and Eastern blocs. The desire for an independent path in international relations led to the Bandung Conference in 1955, where leaders from 29 countries discussed collective concerns. This conference laid the groundwork for the formation of NAM in 1961, aiming to uphold the sovereignty of nations and promote peaceful coexistence.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

NAM does not have a permanent headquarters. The chairmanship rotates triennially among member countries, and the host nation for each summit effectively serves as the administrative center during its tenure.

Members

- Number of Members: As of 2024, NAM comprises 121 member states and 27 observer countries.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to countries that subscribe to the principles established at the Bandung Conference, including mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, noninterference, equality, and peaceful coexistence.

Who are its members?

- NAM's Diverse **Representation:** membership spans countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, reflecting a wide array of political systems, cultures, and economic statuses.
- **Notable Inclusions:** While primarily composed of developing nations, NAM includes countries like India and Indonesia, which play significant roles in regional and global affairs.
- Observer Status: Countries organizations that align with NAM's principles but are not full members can obtain observer status, allowing participation in discussions without voting rights.

India's Membership

Yes - India co-founded NAM in 1961 and has been a leading member. (Jawaharlal *Nehru was one of its architects.)*

What it does (Key Objectives)

Advocacy for **Sovereignty:** champions the rights of nations to self-





- determination and opposes colonialism, imperialism, and foreign occupation.
- **Economic Cooperation:** The movement collaboration promotes developing countries to achieve economic independence and equitable development.
- Social and Cultural Exchange: NAM facilitates programs that encourage understanding cultural and social development among member states.
- Reform of International Institutions: NAM advocates for a more equitable representation of developing countries in global institutions like the United Nations.

Recent Activities

- 19th Summit (January 2024): Held in Kampala, Uganda, under the theme "Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence." The summit addressed issues such as sustainable development, global health challenges, and the impact of geopolitical conflicts on member states.
- COVID-19 Response (2020): NAM conducted an online summit titled "United Against COVID-19," focusing on collaborative efforts to combat the pandemic and mitigate its socio-economic impacts on member countries.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Advocacy for Multilateralism: NAM has been vocal in promoting multilateral challenges, approaches to global emphasizing the importance of solidarity among developing nations to address issues like climate change, economic inequality, and health crises.
- Reform of Global Governance: The movement continues to push for reforms in international institutions to ensure fair representation and decision-making power for developing countries.

India-Specific Developments

- **Active Participation:** India, as a founding member, continues to engage actively in NAM activities. At the 19th Summit in Kampala, India's delegation emphasized the need for collective action in areas such as technology sharing, healthcare, and sustainable development.
- Balancing Global **Relations:** While maintaining its commitment to NAM, India has also been strengthening ties with other international groupings, reflecting a multifaceted approach to its foreign policy.

Comparison with other Orgs

- NAM vs. G77: Both aim to promote the interests of developing countries. However, while the G77 focuses primarily on economic issues within the United Nations framework, NAM addresses a broader spectrum of political, economic, and social issues.
- NAM vs. BRICS: BRICS consists of five major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) focusing on economic cooperation and development. In contrast, NAM has a larger and more diverse membership with a focus on political non-alignment and collective bargaining in international forums.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » Examine the role of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the post-Cold War era. How relevant is NAM in today's multipolar world?
- » Discuss India's involvement in NAM and its relevance to contemporary foreign policy.
- » Critically analyze the principles of NAM in the context of the 21st-century global order.

Key Facts to Remember:

» Founding Year: 1961

» Founding Leaders: Josip Broz Tito



(Yugoslavia), Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Gamal Abdel Nasser (Egypt), Sukarno Kwame Nkrumah (Indonesia), and (Ghana).

» Core Principles (Derived from the **Bandung Conference, 1955):**

- Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
 - Non-aggression
- Non-interference in domestic П affairs
 - □ Equality and mutual benefit
 - Peaceful coexistence
- » Current Membership: 121 member states, 27 observer countries

» Major Summits:

- □ 2023 NAM Ministerial Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan
- □ 2024 Kampala Summit, Uganda (Theme: "Deepening Cooperation for **Shared Global Affluence"**)

India's Position in NAM Today:

- » **Strategic Autonomy:** While remains a committed NAM member, it has evolved its foreign policy to engage with multiple global alliances (QUAD, BRICS, G20).
- » Relevance in the 21st Century: India sees NAM as a diplomatic platform for South-South cooperation, particularly in trade, technology sharing, and development financing.
- » Multilateral **Engagement:** India has pushed for reforms in global governance structures within NAM discussions, advocating for UN Security Council reform and a stronger role for developing nations.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

Global Geopolitical Shifts: As the world moves towards multipolarity, NAM's relevance is debated—whether it remains a Cold War relic or an essential voice for the Global South.

- **India's Foreign Policy:** How India balances NAM membership with other strategic partnerships (like the QUAD, BRICS, and G20) is crucial.
- **Global South Representation: NAM** still acts as a major voice for developing nations, challenging Western dominance in institutions like the UN, WTO, and World Bank.
- NAM's Role in Contemporary Issues: COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, trade barriers, debt restructuring—all remain key discussion points in NAM's recent summits.

Conclusion

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), originally founded during the Cold War, remains a key diplomatic platform for developing nations, advocating for economic sovereignty, political non-alignment, and multilateral cooperation.

For UPSC exams, understanding NAM's historical relevance, India's engagement, and its position in global geopolitics is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Global Economy & Trade).

1.2.5 Group of 77 (G77)

Name of the Organization

Group of 77 (G77)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Group of 77 (G77) is a coalition of developing countries within the United Nations, established to promote its members' collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on major international economic issues. It serves as a platform for these countries to articulate and advocate for their economic and developmental concerns on the global stage.

Year of Formation

129



The G77 was founded on 15 June 1964 during the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1960s, as many nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America gained independence, there was a growing recognition of the need for a unified platform to address the economic disparities between developed and developing countries. The inaugural UNCTAD session provided an opportunity for these nations to convene and collectively voice their concerns, leading to the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries," which marked the establishment of the G77.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

The G77 does not have a permanent headquarters. Its activities are coordinated through various chapters located in major UN centers, including:

- **New York:** United Nations Headquarters
- **Geneva:** UNCTAD
- Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- United Industrial Vienna: **Nations** Development Organization (UNIDO)
- Paris: United **Nations** Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (Group of 24)

Members

- Number of Members: As of 2023, the G77 comprises 134 member countries, representing a significant majority of the world's nations and population.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Membership is open to developing countries that are members of the United Nations and align with the G77's objectives of promoting collective economic interests and enhancing negotiating capacities on international economic issues.

Who are its members?

- Diverse Representation: The G77 encompasses a wide range of countries different geographic regions, including Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. This diversity brings varied perspectives and challenges but also enriches the coalition's discussions and initiatives.
- **China's Participation:** While not an official member, China often collaborates with the G77, leading to the frequent reference of "G77 and China" in joint statements and initiatives.

India's Membership

• Yes – India is a founding member of the G77 coalition of developing countries (est. 1964) and remains active in it.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Advocacy:** Represents and promotes the collective economic interests of developing countries in various international forums.
- **Negotiation:** Enhances joint negotiating capacity on major international economic issues within the UN system.
- **South-South Cooperation:** Encourages and facilitates economic and technical cooperation among developing countries to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- Policy Development: Formulates and advocates for policies that address issues





like trade, finance, technology transfer, and sustainable development.

members to foster inclusive growth.

Recent Activities

- 2023 Summit in Havana, Cuba: The G77 convened a summit focusing on "Current Development **Challenges:** The Role of Science, Technology, and **Innovation."** Leaders discussed strategies to leverage technological advancements for sustainable development and to bridge the digital divide among member nations.
- Advocacy for Financial Reform: The G77 has been vocal in calling for a redesign of the global financial architecture to better serve the needs of developing countries, emphasizing the importance of equitable resource distribution and debt relief.

Recent News & Initiatives

- 60th Anniversary Preparations: As the G77 approaches its 60th anniversary in June 2024, member countries are organizing events and discussions to reflect on past achievements and outline future strategies to address emerging global challenges.
- **Climate Change Advocacy:** The G77 continues to emphasize the principle "common differentiated but responsibilities," urging developed nations to take the lead in reducing emissions and providing financial support to developing countries for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

India-Specific Developments

- Active Participation: India remains a steadfast member of the G77, actively engaging in discussions and negotiations to advance the interests of developing countries.
- **Science and Technology Collaboration:** At the 2023 Havana Summit, India highlighted its initiatives in promoting digital public infrastructure and offered to share its expertise with fellow G77

Comparison with other Orgs

G77 vs. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):

» Focus Areas: While both originated during the 1960s with overlapping memberships, the G77 primarily concentrates on economic issues and development, whereas NAM focuses on political alignment and sovereignty concerns.

G77 vs. BRICS:

- » **Membership:** BRICS consists of five major emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), whereas the G77 includes a broader coalition of 134 developing nations.
- » **Objectives:** BRICS focuses on reshaping financial institutions fostering economic cooperation among its members, while the G77 aims to promote collective economic interests of all developing countries within the UN framework.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

 UPSC Prelims and Mains (GS-II: International) Relations) have featured questions on G77, particularly regarding its role in global economic governance and its relevance for India.

Example UPSC Questions:

- "Discuss the role of the Group of 77 (G77) in global economic governance. How has its contribution evolved over time?"
- » "Compare the G77 with BRICS and NAM in terms of objectives, structure, and impact on global decisionmaking."
- » "How does India leverage participation in G77 to influence multilateral trade and development policies?"





Key Facts to Remember:

- Established: 15 June 1964, during the first UNCTAD session.
- Headquarters: No permanent operates through regional chapters (New York, Geneva, Vienna, Rome, Nairobi, etc.).
- **Members:** 134 countries (largest intergovernmental organization of developing nations).

Key Areas of Focus:

» Economic development, trade negotiations, South-South cooperation, climate change, financial system reforms, technology transfer.

Major Summits:

- » 2023 Havana **Summit:** Theme: Science, Technology, and Innovation for Development.
- » 2024 (Upcoming 60th Anniversary Summit): Expected focus on financial architecture reform, climate action, and equitable growth.

India's Role in G77:

- » Advocates for fair global trade policies.
- » Pushes for technology-sharing and financial aid for developing nations.
- » Aligns with G77 on climate finance and South-South cooperation.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

- Global Economic Inequality: The G77 advocates for a fairer economic order, calling for reforms in IMF, World Bank, and WTO policies.
- Climate Finance & COP Negotiations: G77 pressures developed nations to fulfill climate finance commitments and supports India's stance on "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" (CBDR).
- **South-South Cooperation:** India's role in digital infrastructure sharing, agricultural technology, and healthcare cooperation within the G77 framework.

Global Power Shifts: G77's growing influence in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), COP summits, and trade negotiations makes it a key player in global governance.

The Group of 77 (G77) remains one of the most significant platforms for developing nations, ensuring that their voices are heard in global economic, trade, and climate policies. While originally formed as an economic bloc, it has expanded its role to advocate for technology, sustainability, and fair financial

For UPSC exams, understanding G77's objectives, India's engagement, and its role in multilateral organizations (UN, WTO, IMF, COP summits) is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Global Economy & Trade).

1.2.6 OECD

Name of the Organization

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The OECD is an international organization that collaborates with governments, policymakers, and citizens to establish evidencebased international standards and develop policies aimed at improving economic and social well-being worldwide. It serves as a forum and knowledge hub, providing data, analysis, and best practices across various public policy areas.

Year of Formation

The OECD was founded in 1961, succeeding Organisation the for Economic European **Co-operation** (OEEC), which was established in 1948 to administer the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe after World War II.

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, the OEEC facilitated European economic recovery. As economies

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stabilized, there was a need to address broader economic challenges beyond Europe. This led to the transformation of the OEEC into the OECD in 1961, expanding its focus to include global economic development, trade, and social policy issues.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Paris, France

Members

- Number of Members: As of 2025, the OECD comprises 38 member countries.
- Full List of Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.
- **Criteria for Membership:** Countries must demonstrate a commitment to democratic principles and a market economy. The accession process involves a rigorous evaluation of the candidate country's policies and practices to ensure alignment with OECD standards.

Who are its members?

- **Global Representation:** While the OECD primarily consists of developed countries, it engages with numerous non-member countries and international organizations to address global challenges.
- **Expansion Efforts:** Several countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Peru, and Romania, have expressed

interest in joining the OECD, with formal accession discussions initiated for some.

India's Membership

No - India is not an OECD member. (However, India is an OECD "Key Partner," engaging with many OECD committees without full membership.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Policy **Advice: Analysis** and Conducts research and provides policy recommendations across various sectors, including economics, education, environment, and social welfare.
- Setting International **Standards:** Develops guidelines and best practices to harmonize policies and practices among member and partner countries.
- **Data Collection and Dissemination:** Gathers and publishes statistical data to inform evidence-based policymaking.
- Facilitating International Cooperation: Provides a platform for governments to collaborate on addressing common challenges and share experiences.

Recent Activities

- Global Tax Reform: In July 2021, the OECD facilitated an agreement among 130 countries to implement a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15%, aiming to address tax avoidance by multinational corporations.
- **Economic Outlook Reports:** The OECD has continued to publish biannual Economic Outlook reports, analyzing global economic trends and providing projections. The latest report forecasts a slight pickup in global economic growth for 2024 and 2025, with projected increases of 3.2% each year.
- Suspension of Russia and Belarus: In response to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the OECD suspended the participation of Russia and Belarus in all its



activities.

Recent News & Initiatives

- 2023 Update of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises: In 2023. the OECD revised its Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. This update addresses social, environmental, pressing technological challenges, ensuring that multinational enterprises adhere responsible business practices in a rapidly evolving global context.
- **Economic Policy Reforms 2023 Going** for Growth: The OECD's "Going for Growth 2023" report outlines structural reform priorities for member and partner countries. It emphasizes the need for long-term growth strategies, focusing on areas such as digitalization, green energy transitions, and inclusive economic policies.
- Tax Policy Reforms 2023: This report tracks global tax policy developments, highlighting trends and reforms across OECD countries. It provides insights into how nations are adjusting their tax systems in response to economic challenges and opportunities.
- Science, Technology, and Innovation Outlook 2023: The OECD explores key issues and trends affecting science, technology, and innovation (STI). The 2023 outlook discusses the new operating environment for STI, shaped by global challenges and geopolitical tensions, and underscores the importance of international cooperation.
- **Development Co-operation** Report 2023: Marking its 60th anniversary, this report assesses current challenges in development cooperation. It proposes actions such as fulfillina existing commitments, supporting locally led transformations, modernizing business models, and rebalancing power dynamics in international decision-making.

- **Education Policy Outlook 2023: Aiming** to support countries in achieving the goals set by the 2022 OECD Declaration, this report provides an analysis of education policies. It offers guidance on navigating the evolving educational landscape to ensure quality and inclusive education for
- Place-Based Policies for the Future: In collaboration with the European Commission, the OECD organized a series of seminars in 2023 to evaluate "placepolicies." based These discussions provided valuable insights for policy makers on promoting equitable and sustainable economic development tailored to specific regional contexts.

India-Specific Developments

- India's 2023 G20 Presidency: During its G20 presidency in 2023, India collaborated closely with the OECD to shape discussions on development and climate agendas. The OECD contributed by identifying bottlenecks and providing policy recommendations to advance these critical areas.
- **Economic Outlook for India:** The OECD's Economic Outlook reports have provided projections for India's GDP growth. In the November 2023 report, real GDP growth was projected to slow to 6.3% in FY 2023-24 and 6.1% in FY 2024-25, influenced by adverse weather events and a weakening international outlook.
- **Key Partnership Status:** Since 2007, India has been an OECD Key Partner, engaging in various collaborative efforts across economic policy, corporate governance, anti-corruption, trade, and investment. This partnership has facilitated mutual learning and policy alignment in areas of shared interest.

Comparison with other Orgs

- OECD vs. G20:
 - » **Membership:** The OECD comprises





- 38 primarily high-income countries committed to market economies and democratic principles. In contrast, the G20 includes both developed and emerging economies, representing a broader spectrum of economic development stages.
- » Function: While the OECD focuses on research, policy analysis, and setting international standards, the G20 serves as a forum for international economic cooperation and decision-making among major economies.

OECD vs. BRICS:

- » Membership: BRICS consists of five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The OECD's membership is more extensive and predominantly includes developed nations.
- » **Objectives:** BRICS focuses on promoting economic growth and cooperation among its members, often emphasizing reform of international financial institutions. The OECD aims to promote policies that improve economic and social well-being globally through research and policy recommendations.

OECD vs. IMF/World Bank:

» Function: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank provide financial assistance and support to countries facing economic challenges. The OECD, however, does not offer financial aid but instead provides policy guidance, data analysis, and a platform for policy dialogue.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- » "Discuss the role of the OECD in shaping global economic policies and its relevance to India."
- » "Compare and contrast the objectives and functions of the OECD and the G20."

» "Analyze India's engagement with the OECD and its implications for domestic policy reforms."

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Established:** 1961, succeeding the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).
- » Headquarters: Paris, France.
- » **Members:** 38 countries, primarily highincome economies.
- » India's Status: Key Partner since 2007, actively collaborating on various policy areas.

» Recent Initiatives:

- □ 2023 update of the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- □ Collaboration during India's 2023 G20 Presidency.
- □ Economic analyses projecting India's GDP growth trends.

Key Areas of Relevance for UPSC Exams

International Relations (GS Paper II):

- » The OECD plays a significant role in global economic governance, offering insights into how international organizations influence policies in areas such as taxation, trade, and development.
- » India's engagement as an OECD Key Partner highlights its growing role in global policymaking.

Economic Development (GS Paper III):

- » The OECD's economic policy recommendations provide valuable insights into India's GDP growth trends, taxation policies, and corporate governance reforms.
- » OECD's global tax reform agreement (15% minimum corporate tax rate) impacts India's taxation policy and its stance on tax havens.

Current Affairs (Prelims & Mains):



- » India's collaboration with the OECD during its 2023 G20 Presidency was a significant global development.
- » OECD's Economic Outlook projections for India's GDP (2023-24, 2024-25) impact fiscal policy discussions.

Comparison with Other Organizations:

» G7, G20, BRICS, IMF, and World Bank are often compared in UPSC Mains questions—understanding OECD's role in this landscape is crucial.

Potential UPSC Mains Questions:

- Discuss the role of the OECD in shaping global economic policies and its relevance to India.
- Compare and contrast the objectives and functions of the OECD and the G20.
- Analyze India's engagement with the OECD and its implications for domestic policy reforms.
- How does the OECD's 2023 Global Tax Reform Agreement impact India's corporate tax policies?
- Critically examine the significance of the OECD's Economic Outlook Reports for India's financial planning.

The OECD remains one of the most influential economic organizations, providing policy recommendations that shape global governance, trade, taxation, technology, climate change policies, and digital transformation. While India is not a member, its Key Partner status allows it to engage with the OECD on critical issues like corporate taxation, trade regulations, development financing. and

For UPSC exams, understanding the OECD's objectives, India's role, and its influence on global economic policies is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Economic Development & Globalization).

1.2.7 Commonwealth of **Nations**

Name of the Organization

Commonwealth of Nations

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Commonwealth of Nations, commonly known as the Commonwealth, is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries. It serves as a platform for member states to collaborate on mutual goals, including the promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. The organization facilitates cooperation in areas such as economic development, education, health, and cultural exchange.

Year of Formation

The modern Commonwealth formally established in 1949 with the signing of the London Declaration, which allowed republics and other countries to join the association.

Why they formed it?

The Commonwealth evolved from the British Empire's decolonization process. As former colonies gained independence, there was a desire to maintain cooperative ties and shared values without political dependence. The London Declaration of 1949 marked a turning point, allowing member countries to acknowledge the British monarch as the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth while affirming their own sovereignty.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Marlborough House, London, United Kingdom

Members

• Number of Members: 56 independent

136



countries

- Full List of Members: Antiqua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Eswatini, Fiji, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Zambia.
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to countries that accept the association's values and principles, as outlined in the Commonwealth Charter. While many members have historical ties to the British Empire, countries without such connections, like Mozambique and Rwanda, have also joined, reflecting the organization's evolving nature.

Who are its members?

- **Diversity:** The Commonwealth encompasses a wide range of nations, from some of the world's largest economies to small island developing states. This diversity is a strength, fostering a rich exchange of cultures, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Voluntary Association:** Unlike other international organizations, Commonwealth is a voluntary association. Members are free to join or withdraw, emphasizing the non-binding nature of the union.

India's Membership

Yes – India joined the Commonwealth upon independence in 1947. (It became the first republic in the Commonwealth in 1950 *via the London Declaration.)*

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Promotion of Democracy and Good **Governance:** The Commonwealth supports democratic processes, electoral integrity, and political stability among member states.
- **Economic Development:** It facilitates trade and investment opportunities, aiming to boost economic growth and reduce poverty.
- **Education and Youth Empowerment:** Through scholarships and capacitybuilding programs, the Commonwealth invests in education and empowers young people.
- Cultural Exchange: It promotes cultural understanding and cooperation through events like the Commonwealth Games.
- Climate Change and Environmental **Sustainability:** Recognizing the unique challenges faced by member states, especially small island nations, the Commonwealth advocates for collective action on climate change.

Recent Activities

- 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM): Held in Apia, Samoa, this meeting focused on climate change, adopting the 'Apia Commonwealth Ocean Declaration' to protect oceans and address rising sea levels. Discussions also included financial reparations for historical injustices.
- Leadership Transition: In October 2024, Ghanaian Foreign Minister Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey was elected as the new Commonwealth Secretary-General, succeeding Patricia Scotland.

Recent News & Initiatives

Climate Action Advocacy: Outgoing Secretary-General Patricia Scotland urged member countries to continue robust climate action, emphasizing support for small and vulnerable nations.

Royal Engagement: King Charles III attended the 2024 CHOGM in Samoa, addressing historical issues and advocating for environmental causes.

India-Specific Developments

- CHOGM 2024 Participation: India was represented by Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju at the 2024 CHOGM in Samoa, highlighting India's commitment to the Commonwealth despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's absence.
- Climate Initiatives: India has been actively Commonwealth collaborating with countries on climate action, focusing on renewable energy and sustainable development.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Voluntary **Association:** Unlike organizations with binding treaties, the Commonwealth operates on cooperation and shared values without legal obligations.
- Historical Ties: Many members share a colonial past under the British Empire, providing a unique historical context compared to other international bodies.
- **DiverseMembership:**TheCommonwealth includes countries of varying sizes and economic statuses, fostering a platform for both developed and developing nations.

Commonwealth vs. United Nations (UN):

- » The UN has a universal membership (193 countries), while the Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 countries.
- » The UN has a legally binding charter, whereas Commonwealth agreements are based on mutual cooperation and shared values.

Commonwealth vs. G77:

» G77 is an economic coalition of developing countries advocating while the for economic reforms, Commonwealth focuses on shared

history, cultural ties, and governance.

Commonwealth vs. G20:

» The G20 includes the world's largest global economies, aiming for economic coordination, whereas the Commonwealth promotes democracy, human rights, and development initiatives.

Commonwealth vs. BRICS:

» BRICS focuses on economic cooperation and reformina alobal financial institutions, while the Commonwealth has a broader socio-political and development agenda.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- "Discuss the role of the Commonwealth in fostering cooperation among its member states."
- "How has India's engagement with the Commonwealth evolved over time?"
- "Compare and contrast the objectives and structure of the Commonwealth and the United Nations."

Key Facts to Remember:

- **Established:** 1949 (London Declaration)
- Headquarters: Marlborough House, London, UK
- **Members:** 56 countries

India's Position:

- » India was a founding member of the Commonwealth.
- » Unlike other members, India became a republic in 1950 but remained in the Commonwealth under the London Declaration.
- » India actively participates in CHOGM and Commonwealth programs on trade, education, and climate change.

Current Relevance for UPSC:

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- Geopolitical Importance: The Commonwealth provides India diplomatic space to engage with both developed and developing nations.
- Change Leadership: The Climate Commonwealth plays a key role in addressing climate change, especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), aligning with India's own environmental policies.
- Soft Power & Cultural Diplomacy: The Commonwealth Games and educational exchange programs enhance India's soft power.
- Global South Representation: India's participation helps developing nations collectively address trade, governance, and digital economy challenges.

Conclusion

The Commonwealth of Nations remains a significant international organization focused on democracy, development, and cooperation among member states. Despite lacking legal obligations, it serves as a platform for economic growth, governance reforms, and cultural exchange.

UPSC understanding For exams, Commonwealth's history, India's engagement, and its evolving role in global affairs is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Global Economy & Environment).

1.2.8 Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

Name of the Organization

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, comprising 57 member states across four continents. It serves as the collective voice of the Muslim world, aiming to safeguard and protect the interests of Muslims in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony.

Year of Formation

The OIC was established on 25 September

Why they formed it?

The OIC was founded in response to the arson attack on the Al-Agsa Mosque in Jerusalem on 21 August 1969. This incident galvanized the Muslim world, leading to the First Islamic Summit Conference in Rabat, Morocco, where leaders decided to establish an organization to unite and represent the interests of Muslim-majority countries.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Members

- **Number of Members: 57**
- Full List of Members: Due to the extensive number of member states, please refer to the official OIC website for the complete
- Criteria for Membership: Membership is open to any Muslim-majority country that agrees to the OIC's charter and objectives.

Who are its members?

- **Diversity:** The OIC's membership spans across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, encompassing a wide range of cultures, languages, and economic statuses.
- Notable Exclusions: India, which has a significant Muslim population, is not a





member. Despite having over 200 million Muslims, India's membership has been consistently opposed by Pakistan, a founding member of the OIC.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member of the OIC. (India, with a large Muslim population, was invited to the 1969 founding summit but membership was blocked; it has since been occasionally invited as a quest – e.g. 2019 – but remains outside the OIC.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Political and Economic Cooperation: The OIC aims to strengthen solidarity and cooperation among member states in political, economic, social, cultural, and scientific fields.
- **Protection of Muslim Rights:** It endeavors to protect the rights and interests of Muslims globally, including supporting the Palestinian cause and addressing issues faced by Muslim minorities.
- **Promotion of Peace and Security:** The organization works towards resolving conflicts involving member states and promotes international peace and security.
- **Educational and Cultural Exchange:** The OIC fosters educational and cultural exchanges to promote understanding and unity among member nations.

Recent Activities

- 2023 Extraordinary Summit: In response to escalating tensions in the Middle East, the OIC held an extraordinary summit in May 2023 to address the situation in Palestine and reaffirm support for the Palestinian people.
- **Afghanistan Engagement:** Following the political changes in Afghanistan in 2021, the OIC has been actively involved in coordinating humanitarian assistance and advocating for inclusive governance in the country.

COVID-19 **Response:** The OIC has virtual meetings organized and symposiums to discuss collective actions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of life preservation and adherence to health quidelines.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Condemnation **Anti-Muslim** of **Prejudice:** The OIC has expressed concerns over incidents of Islamophobia in various countries, including India, urging governments to take steps to curb the growing tide of Islamophobia.
- Human Rights **Advocacy:** The organization continues to address human rights violations affecting Muslims, issuing statements and resolutions to draw international attention to these issues.

India-SpecificDevelopments

- OIC's Stance on Kashmir: The OIC has consistently issued statements expressing concern over the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, urging India to uphold the rights of the Kashmiri people.
- **India's Response:** The Indian government has criticized the OIC's statements. describing them as "unwarranted" and reflective of an "anti-India agenda."

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Religious Foundation:** Unlike other intergovernmental organizations, OIC is uniquely centered around Islamic solidarity and cooperation, focusing on issues pertinent to the Muslim world.
- **Global Reach:** With member states across multiple continents, the OIC addresses a diverse array of political, social, and economic issues affecting Muslims worldwide.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

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- » Discuss the role of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in addressing issues faced by Muslim-majority countries.
- » Analyze the impact of OIC's statements on India's internal affairs and India's foreign policy responses.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** 1969, in response to the Al-Agsa Mosque incident.
- » Headquarters: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- » Membership: 57 countries across four continents.
- » India's Status: Not a member: OIC has been critical of India's policies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Relevance to UPSC Exams:

International Relations (GS Paper II):

- » Understanding OIC's influence on global geopolitics and how it affects India's foreign relations with key Islamic nations.
- » India's diplomatic engagements with OIC member states, particularly in trade, energy, and security cooperation.
- » The impact of OIC's stance on issues like Kashmir, Palestine, and Islamophobia on India's diplomatic strategies.

Geopolitics & Regional Groupings (GS-

- » The role of religion-based organizations in global diplomacy and conflict resolution.
- » OIC's statements on India and their diplomatic consequences.

Current Affairs & Policy (Prelims & Mains):

- » Recent OIC summits and resolutions, particularly regarding Afghanistan, Palestine, and Kashmir.
- » India's response to OIC statements and how it navigates relations with key

Islamic nations like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Indonesia.

Comparison with Other Regional & **Religious Organizations:**

- » OIC vs. Arab League: While both focus on issues related to Arab and Muslimmajority nations, the Arab League is region-specific, whereas OIC has a global outreach.
- » OIC vs. NAM (Non-Aligned Movement): OIC represents Muslim nations, while NAM includes a diverse group of developing countries with a focus on sovereignty and non-alignment.
- » **OIC vs. G77:** G77 focuses on economic cooperation among developing nations, whereas OIC has a broader religiouspolitical agenda.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is one of the most significant intergovernmental organizations focused on representing the interests of Muslimmajority countries. Despite India's large Muslim population, it is not a member due to geopolitical factors, particularly opposition from Pakistan.

For UPSC exams, understanding objectives, key resolutions, and its impact on India's diplomatic relations is essential for GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Global Affairs & Security Issues).

1.2.9 North Atlantic Treaty **Organization (NATO)**

Name of the Organization

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

NATO is an intergovernmental military alliance that provides a collective defense mechanism for its member countries. It serves as a political and military alliance, enabling member nations to consult and cooperate on defense and



security-related issues to maintain peace and security.

Year of Formation

 NATO was established on April 4, 1949, with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the Washington Treaty.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, European nations faced the daunting task of rebuilding their economies and ensuring security against potential aggression, particularly from the Soviet Union. The United States recognized that a stable and secure Europe was vital to its own national interests. This led to the formation of NATO as a collective defense alliance to deter Soviet expansion and foster political integration in Europe.

Type

Intergovernmental Military Alliance

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Brussels, Belgium

Members

- **Number of Members: 32**
- Full List of Members: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France. Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.
- **Criteria for Membership:**
 - » Aspirant countries must demonstrate a commitment to democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.

- » They must be willing and able to contribute to the alliance's defense and security.
- » Membership decisions are made by unanimous agreement among existing members.

Who are its members?

- **Expansion:** NATO has undergone several rounds of enlargement since its inception, with the most recent addition being Sweden in March 2024.
- **Notable Exclusions:** Countries like Ukraine and Georgia have expressed interest in joining NATO. However, their membership has been a subject of extensive debate and has not been realized, partly due to geopolitical tensions with Russia.

India's Membership

No – India has no membership (NATO is a North Atlantic military alliance of which India is not part).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Collective Defense: Under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, an armed attack against one member is considered an attack against all, obligating members to assist in defense.
- Crisis Management: NATO engages in conflict prevention and conducts crisismanagement including operations, peacekeeping missions.
- **Cooperative Security:** The promotes security through partnerships and cooperative engagements with nonmember countries and international organizations.
- **Deterrence and Defense:** Maintaining a credible deterrence posture to prevent aggression against member states.

Recent Activities

• 2024 Washington Summit: Held in July 2024, this summit marked NATO's 75th

anniversary. Key discussions included support for Ukraine amidst ongoing conflicts and addressing challenges posed by China and Russia. The summit also saw the approval of the Washington Summit Declaration, outlining NATO's strategic priorities.

- Steadfast Defender 2024 Exercise: Conducted from January to May 2024, this was NATO's largest military exercise since the Cold War, involving over 90,000 troops. The exercise aimed to enhance readiness and interoperability among member forces.
- Leadership Transition: In October 2024, Jens Stoltenberg stepped down after a decade as Secretary General. He was succeeded by Mark Rutte, the former Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **U.S. Policy Shift:** In February 2025, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced a shift in America's security priorities, emphasizing homeland security over European defense. This move has raised doubts about America's commitment to NATO's collective security guarantees, particularly Article 5, which ensures mutual defense among member nations.
- European **Defense Autonomy:** response to the U.S. policy shift, European leaders are deliberating on increasing spendina and defense enhancing strategic cooperation to assume greater responsibility for regional Discussions include potential deployment of European troops in conflict zones like Ukraine, contingent on substantial U.S. support.
- **NATO Air Defense Initiatives:** On February 13, 2025, NATO launched two new multinational High-Visibility initiatives to enhance airspace protection against low-level threats. Fifteen Allies committed to developing efficient solutions targeting threats flying below 500 feet (150 meters).

India-Specific Developments

- **Exploration of NATO-India Cooperation:** While India is not a NATO member, there have been discussions about strengthening cooperation between NATO and India. Shared values such as democracy, sovereignty, and the rule of law form the basis for potential collaboration in areas like maritime security, cyber defense, and counter-terrorism.
- **Strategic Autonomy Considerations:** India maintains a policy of strategic autonomy and has historically refrained from entering military alliances. Its longstanding defense relationship with Russia and its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific influence its cautious approach toward formal ties with NATO.

Comparison with other Orgs

- NATO vs. United Nations (UN): While both are international organizations. NATO is a military alliance focused on collective defense among member states, whereas the UN is a broader organization aimed at promoting international cooperation across various sectors, including peacekeeping, human rights, and development.
- NATO vs. European Union (EU): The EU is a political and economic union of European countries, focusing on economic integration and political cooperation. In contrast, NATO is a defense alliance with a primary focus on military cooperation and collective security.
- NATO vs. Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO): The CSTO is a military alliance comprising select post-Soviet states, serving as a counterpart to NATO in the Eurasian region. While both are defense alliances, NATO has a broader international presence and a larger number of member states.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:



- » Discuss the role of NATO in maintaining global security in the post-Cold War era.
- » Analyze the implications of NATO's eastward expansion on international relations.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** 1949, through the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty).
- » **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium.
- » **Membership:** 32 countries across North America and Europe.
- » **Article 5:** Collective defense clause stating that an attack against one member is considered an attack against all.
- » **India's Status:** Not a member: maintains strategic autonomy with a focus on independent foreign policy.

Relevance to UPSC Exams:

- » International Relations (GS Paper II): Understanding NATO's structure, objectives, and its impact on global geopolitics is crucial.
- » Current Affairs: Recent shifts in U.S. defense policy and their implications for NATO and global security dynamics.
- » India's Foreign Policy: Insights into India's stance on military alliances and its strategic partnerships, especially in the context of NATO's outreach in the Indo-Pacific region.

1.2.10 Shanghai Cooperation **Organisation (SCO)**

Name of the Organization

Shanghai **Organisation** Cooperation (SCO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

intergovernmental (SCO) is permanent international organization that focuses on fostering mutual trust, promoting effective cooperation in politics, trade, economy, research, technology, and culture, and ensuring peace, security, and stability in the Eurasian region.

Year of Formation

The SCO was established on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China.

Why they formed it?

The SCO evolved from the "Shanghai Five" group, which was formed in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan to resolve border disputes and enhance regional security. With the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001, the group was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, aiming to address broader regional challenges such as terrorism, separatism, extremism, and to promote economic cooperation among member states.

Type

Intergovernmental International Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• The SCO Secretariat is headquartered in Beijing, China.

Members

- **Number of Members: 10**
- Full List of Members: China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Iran (joined in 2023), Belarus (joined in 2024)
- Criteria for Membership:
 - » Commitment to the principles and objectives of the SCO Charter.
 - » Geographical proximity to the existing member states.

Clarity OF CONCEPT UPSC

» Consensus among all member states regarding the admission of new members. among member countries.

Who are its members?

- Expansion: The SCO has gradually expanded its membership since its inception, reflecting its growing influence in regional and global affairs. The inclusion of India and Pakistan in 2017 marked a significant enlargement, bringing together major South Asian powers. Iran's accession in 2023 and Belarus's in 2024 further extended the organization's reach into the Middle East and Europe, respectively.
- Notable Exclusions: While the SCO has several dialogue partners and observer states, countries like Afghanistan and Mongolia have not attained full membership, despite their strategic locations and interest in joining.

India's Membership

• Yes – India became a full member of SCO in June 2017 (after being an observer since 2005).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Security Cooperation: The SCO prioritizes combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism through joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and coordinated law enforcement efforts. The establishment of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) exemplifies this commitment.
- Economic Collaboration: Member states engage in initiatives to enhance trade, investment, and economic integration. Discussions have included proposals for creating a free trade area and collaborative infrastructure projects.
- Cultural and Humanitarian Exchange: The SCO promotes cultural understanding and people-to-people connections through forums, educational exchanges, and cultural events. Initiatives like the SCO University facilitate academic collaboration

Recent Activities

- 2024 Astana Summit: Held in July 2024, this summit marked Belarus's accession as the first European member state, expanding the SCO's geographical scope. Discussions focused on enhancing regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges.
- Iran's Membership: In 2023, Iran was officially admitted as a full member, reflecting the organization's intent to include key regional players and enhance its strategic depth in the Middle East.
- **Economic Initiatives:** The SCO has continued to emphasize economic collaboration, with member states advocating for increased trade in local currencies and the development of infrastructure projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Pakistan's Advocacy for BRI Expansion:
 At the October 2024 meeting in Islamabad,
 Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for the expansion of China's Belt and Road Initiative to enhance regional connectivity and economic integration among SCO member states.
- Enhanced Trilateral Cooperation: In October 2024, China proposed strengthening trilateral cooperation with Russia and Mongolia during a meeting on the sidelines of the SCO summit, aiming to bolster regional stability and economic ties.
- Turkey's Engagement: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed Turkey's intention to deepen ties with Eastern entities, including the SCO, while maintaining its orientation towards the West, highlighting the organization's growing appeal beyond its traditional sphere.



India-Specific Developments

- Leadership in Cultural **Initiatives:** During its chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), India hosted the 20th Session of Culture Ministers on April 3, 2023. The virtual meeting, chaired by India's Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Development of the North Eastern Region, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, focused on enhancing cultural cooperation among member states. Ministers from Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated, underscoring India's commitment to fostering cultural ties within the SCO framework.
- Hosting the 4th SCO Startup Forum: On March 19, 2024, India organized the fourth edition of the SCO Startup Forum in New Delhi. This initiative aimed to broaden startup interactions among member states, create an environment conducive to innovation, promote job creation, and inspire young talent to develop innovative solutions. The forum highlighted India's role in driving economic collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit within the SCO.
- Participation in the 23rd SCO Council of **Heads of Government Meeting:** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar represented India at the 23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, held on October 15-16, 2024, in Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting focused on trade and economic cooperation among member states. Despite strained bilateral relations, India's participation demonstrated its commitment to regional collaboration within the SCO framework.
- Stance on Bilateral **Discussions:** During the October 2024 SCO summit in Islamabad, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar ruled out bilateral talks with Pakistan, emphasizing that his visit was solely for multilateral engagements within the SCO context. This position reflects India's cautious approach to bilateral relations with Pakistan, focusing instead on broader regional cooperation.

Comparison with other Orgs

SCO vs. BRICS:

- » Membership and Focus: Both the SCO and BRICS include China, Russia, and India as members. However, the SCO primarily focuses on regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange in the Eurasian context, while BRICS centers on economic issues and development among emerging economies globally.
- » Organizational Structure: The SCO is a formal intergovernmental organization with a charter and permanent bodies, such as the Secretariat in Beijing. In contrast, BRICS operates as an informal group without a permanent secretariat, relying on annual summits and meetings to coordinate activities.
- » Geopolitical Orientation: While both organizations aim to provide alternatives to Western-dominated global structures, the SCO has a stronger emphasis on regional security and counterterrorism, particularly in Central Asia. BRICS focuses more on reshaping global financial and economic governance to reflect the interests of emerging economies.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions:

- » Discuss the significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in promoting regional security and economic cooperation in Eurasia.
- » Analyze India's role and strategic interests in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** The SCO was founded on June 15, 2001, in Shanghai, China.
- » Headquarters: The organization's secretariat is located in Beijing, China.
- » **Membership:** As of 2024, the SCO

comprises 10 member states: China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, (joined in 2023), and Belarus (joined in 2024).

- » **Objectives:** The SCO aims to strengthen mutual trust and neighborliness among promote effective member states, cooperation in politics, trade, economy, research, technology, and culture, and ensure peace, security, and stability in the region.
- » India's Involvement: India became a full member of the SCO in 2017 and has actively participated in various initiatives, including hosting cultural and startup forums, reflecting its commitment to regional cooperation.

Relevance to UPSC Exams:

- » International Relations (GS Paper II): Understanding the role of regional organizations like the SCO is crucial for analyzing India's foreign policy and strategic interests.
- » Current Affairs: Recent developments, such as India's leadership in cultural and economic initiatives within the SCO and its diplomatic engagements with member states, are pertinent for examination preparation.
- » Geopolitical **Dynamics:** Insights into how the SCO influences regional security, economic cooperation, and India's strategic positioning provide a comprehensive understanding of Eurasian geopolitics.

2. Regional Integration and Cooperation **Organizations**

These organizations bring together countries from the same region to work on common goals like trade, security, and development. For example, **ASEAN** connects Southeast Asian nations, SAARC links South Asian countries, and the European Union (EU) unites European countries with a common currency and policies. Some groups focus on trade, like Mercosur and RCEP, while others focus on security, like NATO and SCO. These organizations help neighboring countries solve problems together and make their region stronger in world affairs.

2.1 Intergovernmental **Regional Organizations**

Intergovernmental regional organizations are formal institutions where countries from a specific region collaborate on economic, political, and social issues. These organizations promote regional unity, economic growth, and collective security, often acting as a bridge between national governments and global institutions like the United Nations. Some organizations, like the **European Union (EU)**, are highly integrated with shared laws and policies, while others, like ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and SAARC (South Asian Association **for Regional Cooperation),** focus on economic cooperation and diplomatic coordination. Many of these organizations work on regional trade, infrastructure development, and cross-border issues such as migration and climate change. Some also have military or security dimensions, ensuring stability in their respective regions. They play an important role in shaping regional policies and strengthening economic ties among neighboring countries.

2.1.1 African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) is a continental organization comprising all 55 African countries, established to promote unity, peace, and development across the continent.

Name of the Organization

African Union (AU)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The AU is an intergovernmental organization that aims to promote unity and solidarity among African states, accelerate political and socioeconomic integration, and advocate for peace, security, and stability on the continent.

Year of Formation

The African Union was officially launched in 2002, succeeding the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963.

Why they formed it?

The AU was formed to address the limitations of the OAU, particularly its inability to effectively intervene in conflicts and promote economic integration. The transformation aimed to create a more robust framework for achieving political stability, economic growth, and social development across Africa.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Members

The African Union comprises 55 member states, encompassing all internationally recognized countries on the African continent.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to all African states. Notably, Morocco rejoined the AU in 2017 after previously withdrawing from the OAU in 1984 over the organization's recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

India's Membership

No – India is not in the AU (membership is limited to African states).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The AU's key objectives include:
 - » Promoting unity and solidarity among African countries.
 - » Defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states.
 - » Accelerating political and socioeconomic integration.
 - » Encouraging international cooperation.
 - » Promoting peace, security, and stability.
 - » Advocating for democratic principles, human rights, and good governance.
 - » Facilitating sustainable development in economic, social, and cultural spheres.
 - » Coordinating policies among Regional **Economic Communities.**
 - » Advancing research in science and technology.
 - » Collaborating with international partners to eradicate preventable diseases and promote good health.

Recent Activities

- **2023:** The AU was admitted as a permanent member of the G20 during the New Delhi summit, enhancing its role in global economic discussions.
- **2024:** The AU launched its annual summit with a focus on reparations for slavery and colonialism, marking 2025 as the "Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations."



February 2025: Mahmoud Ali Youssout,
Djibouti's foreign minister, was elected as
the new Chairperson of the African Union
Commission, succeeding Moussa Faki of
Chad.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Conflict Resolution: The AU has been actively involved in addressing ongoing conflicts, such as the situation in eastern Congo and the activities of al-Shabaab in Somalia. In December 2024, the UN authorized a new mission, the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), to combat al-Shabaab.
- Advocacy for UN Security Council Reform: Candidates for the AU chairperson position have emphasized the need for African representation with two permanent seats on the UN Security Council, highlighting the continent's growing demand for a more significant role in global governance.

India-Specific Developments

- G20 Membership: India played a pivotal role in advocating for the AU's permanent membership in the G20, which was achieved during the 2023 New Delhi summit.
- Strengthening Bilateral Relations: India has intensified its engagement with African countries, with Indian Prime Ministers visiting Africa 76 times since the 1960s, a level of engagement unmatched by Africa's other external partners.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: The AU is unique in its comprehensive mandate, covering political, economic, social, and security dimensions specific to the African continent.
- **Similar Organizations:** Comparable entities include the European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN), which also focus on regional integration and cooperation. However, the AU's emphasis on pan-African unity and its historical context of decolonization distinguish it from these organizations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

 Past UPSC Questions: The AU has been a topic in previous UPSC examinations, with questions focusing on its objectives, structure, and role in international affairs.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » Understanding the AU's formation, objectives, and member states is crucial.
- » Awareness of recent developments, such as the AU's G20 membership and its initiatives in conflict resolution, is essential.
- » Knowledge of India's relationship with the AU, including collaborative efforts and mutual interests, is important for the international relations segment of the exam.

2.1.2 ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten Southeast Asian countries, established to promote political and economic cooperation and regional stability.

Name of the Organization

 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ASEAN is a political and economic union that aims to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development among its members, while promoting regional peace and stability through adherence to justice and the rule of law.

Year of Formation

Established on August 8, 1967, in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration).

Why they formed it?

In the context of post-colonial Southeast Asia during the Cold War, ASEAN was formed to foster regional cooperation, reduce hostilities, and counter the spread of communism. The founding nations sought to create a platform for dialogue and collaboration to ensure peace, stability, and economic development in the region.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Jakarta, Indonesia

Members

ASEAN comprises 10 member states:

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Membership is open to Southeast Asian nations that agree to the principles of the ASEAN Charter.

Who are its members?

Timor-Leste has been granted observer status and is expected to become a full member in 2025.

India's Membership

No – India is not an ASEAN member. (India instead is a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN since the 1990s, not a member of the 10-nation bloc.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

ASEAN's primary objectives include:

- » Accelerating economic growth, social progress, and cultural development.
- » Promoting regional peace and stability.
- » Collaborating on matters of mutual interest in economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific, and administrative fields.
- » Providing assistance to each other in training and research facilities.
- » Maintaining close and beneficial cooperation with existing international organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Recent Activities

- 2023: ASEAN attracted \$230 billion in investments, reflecting confidence and trust in the bloc.
- **2024:** Malaysia appointed former Thai Premier Thaksin Shinawatra as an adviser for its upcoming ASEAN chairmanship.
- **2025:** Timor-Leste is expected to become a full member of ASEAN.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Myanmar Conflict:** ASEAN continues to address the ongoing civil war in Myanmar, emphasizing the need for inclusive elections and adherence to the "Five Point Consensus" peace plan.
- **South China Sea Disputes:** Efforts are ongoing to establish a binding code of conduct with China to manage territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

India-Specific Developments

- Strengthening Partnerships: ASEAN and India have continued to enhance their partnership, focusing on areas such as trade, investment, and cultural exchange.
- Strategic **Engagements:** High-level meetings between ASEAN and Indian officials have been held to discuss regional security and economic cooperation.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: ASEAN operates on the principles of non-interference and consensus, which, while fostering unity, can sometimes lead to challenges in decisive action.
- Similar Organizations: Compared to the European Union, ASEAN has a less centralized governance structure and emphasizes state sovereignty.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: Questions have focused on ASEAN's objectives, member countries, and India's relationship with the organization.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Understanding ASEAN's formation, objectives, and member states is crucial.
- » Awareness of recent developments, such as Timor-Leste's expected membership and ongoing regional disputes, is essential.
- of » Knowledge India's strategic partnership with ASEAN, including economic and security dimensions, is important for the international relations segment of the exam.

2.1.3 League of Arab States

The Arab League, officially known as the League of Arab States, is a regional organization of Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa, established to promote political, economic, cultural, and social cooperation among its member states.

Name of the Organization

League of Arab States (commonly referred to as the Arab League)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Arab League regional intergovernmental organization that aims to strengthen ties among member states, coordinate their policies, and promote common interests in various domains, including political, economic, cultural, and social affairs.

Year of Formation

Established on March 22, 1945, in Cairo, Egypt.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, Arab nations sought to unify their efforts to gain independence from colonial powers, address common challenges, and assert their sovereignty. The formation of the Arab League was a manifestation of Pan-Arabism, aiming to foster unity and collaboration among Arab countries.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Cairo, Egypt

Members

The Arab League comprises 22 member states:

Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Membership is open to Arab countries that share cultural, linguistic, and historical ties.

Who are its members?

Syria's membership was suspended in 2011 due to the government's violent crackdown on protests during the Syrian Civil War. However, in May 2023, the Arab League agreed to reinstate Syria's membership, allowing it to participate in



league activities.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (the League consists of Arab countries).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The Arab League's primary objectives include:
 - » Strengthening relations among member states.
 - » Coordinating policies achieve to cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and social programs.
 - » Safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of member states.
 - » Providing a platform for member states to discuss and resolve issues of common concern.

Recent Activities

- 2023: The Arab League held its 32nd summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on May 19, 2023. Notably, Syria was readmitted to the league during this summit after a 12year suspension.
- **2023:** Algeria hosted the 13th Arab Sports Games from July 5 to July 15, 2023, with participation from all 22 member states.
- **2023:** In November 2023, an extraordinary Arab-Islamic summit was convened in Rivadh to address the Israel-Hamas conflict. The summit aimed to tackle the ongoing crisis in Gaza and its neighboring regions, focusing on the worsening conditions that endanger civilian lives and regional stability.

Recent News & Initiatives

Gaza Conflict: In January 2025, the Arab League called for UN peacekeepers to be deployed in the occupied Palestinian territories, accusing Israel of obstructing ceasefire efforts in Gaza.

Syria's Reintegration: Following Syria's readmission, the Arab League has been working on initiatives to support Syria's reconstruction and reintegration into regional frameworks.

India-Specific Developments

India maintains observer status in the Arab League and continues to engage in diplomatic and economic dialogues with member states. While there have been no significant changes in formal relations, India has expressed support for the league's efforts in regional stability and development.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Unique Aspects:** The Arab League serves as a collective voice for Arab nations, focusing on issues pertinent to the Arab world, such as the Palestinian cause, regional conflicts, and cultural integration.
- Similar Organizations: Comparable to the African Union or ASEAN, the Arab League aims to foster regional cooperation. However, its effectiveness has been varied, often criticized for a lack of cohesive action and enforceable resolutions.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions:

- » The Arab League has been featured in UPSC questions related to international organizations, regional conflicts (such as the Israel-Palestine issue), and India's foreign relations with the Middle East.
- » Ouestions have also covered its formation, objectives, and effectiveness in resolving disputes.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » The Arab League's role in the Palestinian issue is crucial for international relations (IR) topics.
- » Understanding Syria's suspension and reinstatement in the Arab League provides insights into regional

diplomacy.

- » The 2023 Riyadh Arab-Islamic Summit on Gaza and Israel is a significant current affairs topic.
- » The Arab League's economic initiatives like the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) can be important for India's trade relations.
- » India's observer status in the Arab League and its growing energy, trade, and security ties with member states make it relevant for India's foreign policy section.

By keeping track of the Arab League's recent activities, exams can improve their understanding of Middle Eastern geopolitics, India's diplomatic stance, and regional economic groupings—key topics for UPSC Prelims and Mains.

2.1.4 Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a regional organization that promotes economic integration and cooperation among its member states in the Caribbean.

Name of the Organization

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

What it is (Nature and Function)

CARICOM is an intergovernmental organization aiming to promote economic integration, coordinate foreign policy, and ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of integration among its member states.

Year of Formation

• Established on August 1, 1973, through the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Why they formed it?

CARICOM was formed to replace the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) with the goal of creating a common market

and establishing a framework for economic integration and cooperation among Caribbean nations.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Georgetown, Guyana

Members

• CARICOM comprises 15 member states and 5 associate members.

Member States:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

Associate Members:

Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands

Membership is open to Caribbean countries and territories that share the organization's goals and are willing to adhere to its principles.

Who are its members?

 In July 2024, Curação became an associate member of CARICOM, expanding the organization's reach within the Dutch Caribbean.

India's Membership

 No – India is not a member (CARICOM is for Caribbean states).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- CARICOM's primary objectives include:
 - » Promoting economic integration and cooperation among member states.

- » Coordinating foreign policy among member states.
- » Ensuring equitable sharing of the benefits of integration.
- » Implementing special projects for less-developed countries within the community.

Recent Activities

- July 2023: CARICOM leaders agreed to implement free movement for all CARICOM nationals by March 2024, enhancing regional integration.
- July 2024: Grenadian Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell assumed chairmanship of CARICOM, pledging to advocate for climate justice and reduce gun violence.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Climate Justice Advocacy: CARICOM continues to advocate for climate justice, disproportionate emphasizing the impact of climate change on small island developing states and urging developed nations to fulfill their commitments to emission reductions and climate financing.
- **Discussions:** The Reparations organization is engaging in discussions with former colonial powers regarding reparations for slavery, highlighting the enduring socio-economic impacts of colonialism on member states.

India-Specific Developments

- India-CARICOM Second Summit (November 2024): Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the summit held in Georgetown, Guyana, marking the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in over 50 years. During the summit, several key initiatives were proposed to strengthen India-CARICOM relations:
 - » Climate Change Collaboration: PM

- Modi called for enhanced cooperation in renewable energy and climate change, urging CARICOM members to join global initiatives led by India, such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- » Digital Public Infrastructure: India offered its Digital Public Infrastructure. includina cloud-based DiaiLocker and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) models, to CARICOM countries to augment public service delivery.
- » Cultural and Sports **Exchange:** Training programs in India were announced for 11 young women cricketers from each CARICOM country, along with plans to organize "Days of Indian Culture" in member countries to strengthen people-to-people ties.
- » Healthcare Support: India offered its model of providing affordable medicines generic through Jan Aushadhi Kendras and announced the deployment of Yoga experts to promote health and well-being in CARICOM nations.
- **Cooperation:** » Maritime India expressed readiness to assist CARICOM members in maritime domain mapping and hydrography to boost ocean economy and maritime security in the Caribbean Sea.

The CARICOM leaders welcomed these initiatives, appreciating India's leadership in advocating for the Global South and its support for climate justice for Small Island Developing States. They also expressed interest in collaborating with India on reforming global institutions. PM Modi announced that the next India-CARICOM Summit would be hosted in India.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects:
 - » CARICOMprimarily focuses on economic integration among island small



developing states, which face unique challenges such as limited economic diversification, high dependence on tourism, vulnerability to climate change, and geographic isolation.

- » Unlike larger regional organizations like the European Union (EU) or ASEAN, CARICOM places a strong emphasis on climate resilience, given the severe impact of hurricanes and rising sea levels on its member nations.
- » It has its own CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), designed to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people within the region.

• Similar Organizations:

- » African Union (AU): Similar in promoting regional integration, but AU focuses more on political cooperation and security, whereas CARICOM is primarily economic.
- » Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Like CARICOM, ASEAN promotes economic integration and regional cooperation but has a much larger and more diverse membership, including major economies like Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- » Pacific Islands Forum (PIF): This organization also represents small island nations but is centered in the Pacific Ocean, addressing similar climate change and economic sustainability concerns.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

• Past UPSC Questions:

- » CARICOM has been mentioned in UPSC questions related to regional trade blocs, climate negotiations, and India's role in the Global South.
- » Candidates have been asked about its significance in economic integration, its focus on climate adaptation, and India's diplomatic outreach in the Caribbean.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » Understanding CARICOM's economic framework (CSME) is crucial for topics on regional trade blocs in UPSC GS Paper II (International Relations).
- » India's recent engagement with CARICOM, including the Second India-CARICOM Summit 2024, is important for India's foreign policy section.
- » CARICOM's advocacy for climate justice is significant for climate diplomacy and international organizations in GS Paper III (Environment & Climate Change).
- » UPSC exams should be aware of India's growing outreach to Latin America and the Caribbean, as it aligns with broader efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation.

2.1.5 European Union (EU)

The European Union (EU) is a unique political and economic union of 27 European countries, established to foster integration and promote common policies among its member states.

Name of the Organization

• European Union (EU)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The EU is a supranational organization that governs common economic, social, and security policies across its member countries. It facilitates the free movement of goods, services, people, and capital, and enacts legislation in various domains, including justice and home affairs.

Year of Formation

• The EU was officially established on November 1, 1993, with the enforcement of the Maastricht Treaty.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, European nations sought to prevent further conflicts and



promote economic recovery through integration. Initial efforts led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, followed by the European Economic Community in 1957, eventually evolving into the European Union in 1993.

Type

Intergovernmental and supranational organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Brussels, Belgium

Members

The EU comprises 27 member countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia , Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

Who are its members?

• Membership is open to European countries that uphold democratic values and are committed to promoting them. Prospective members must meet the Copenhagen criteria, which include stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, a functioning market economy, and the acceptance of existing EU laws and regulations.

India's Membership

• No – India is not a member (the EU is composed of European countries).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The EU's primary objectives include:
 - » Promoting peace, its values, and the well-being of its citizens
 - » Offering freedom, security, and justice

without internal borders

- » Ensuring sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and social justice
- » Combating social exclusion and discrimination
- » Enhancing economic. social. and territorial cohesion among member states
- » Establishing an economic and monetary union with the euro as its currency

Recent Activities

- 2023: The EU agreed on new rules to more evenly share the responsibility of hosting migrants and reformed asylum and border security procedures.
- **2024:** The European Commission awarded contracts to develop IRIS², a €10.6 billion secure satellite constellation aimed at providing encrypted communications and new commercial services.
- **2025:** European defense stocks surged as U.S. officials met with Russian counterparts to discuss ending the war in Ukraine, reflecting the EU's focus on regional security.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Ukraine Conflict:** The EU has been actively involved in addressing the Ukraine crisis, with member states expressing concerns over U.S.-Russia talks that excluded European representatives.
- **EU Enlargement:** Discussions continue regarding the potential expansion of the EU to include countries like Ukraine and those in the Western Balkans, though challenges persist.

India-Specific Developments

Trade Relations: The EU is India's largest trading partner, accounting for €124 billion worth of trade in goods in 2023, representing 12.2% of India's total trade.

- Clarity UPSC
- Strategic Partnership: In 2023, the EU and India launched a Trade and Technology Council focusing on digital transformation and green technologies.
- High-Level Meetings: The 5th India-EU Strategic Partnership Review Meeting and 10th Foreign Policy and Security Consultations were held recently, emphasizing the importance of the partnership in addressing global challenges and promoting a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Comparison with other Orgs (Continued)

- Similar Organizations:
 - » ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations): Unlike the EU, ASEAN follows a non-interference principle, meaning it does not impose collective decisions on its members in political or security matters. The EU, in contrast, has supranational decision-making powers in various sectors.
 - » African Union (AU): While the AU promotes regional cooperation and peacekeeping, it does not have a common currency or supranational governance like the EU.
 - » NAFTA/USMCA (North American Free Trade Agreement / United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement): NAFTA/ USMCA is strictly an economic trade bloc, whereas the EU includes political, social, and legal integration mechanisms among its members.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions

- The EU has been featured multiple times in UPSC Prelims and Mains under international relations, global trade, and regional groupings.
- Previous questions have focused on:
 - » The formation of the EU and its impact on global politics.

- » The Eurozone crisis and its implications for India.
- » EU-India trade relations and free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations.
- » The impact of Brexit on India and the global economy.
- » The role of the EU in climate change negotiations, such as its support for the Paris Agreement.

Key Facts for UPSC Exams

• Formation and Expansion:

- » The Maastricht Treaty (1993) formally established the EU.
- » The Schengen Agreement allows free movement across most EU countries.
- » Brexit (2020) made the UK the first country to leave the EU.
- » Ukraine and Balkan nations are potential future members of the EU.

• Institutions of the EU:

- » European Commission: Executive body that proposes laws.
- » European Parliament: Elected legislative body that amends and approves laws.
- » European Council: Consists of EU country leaders and decides major policies.
- » Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU): Ensures uniform application of EU laws.
- » European Central Bank (ECB): Manages the Euro and monetary policies.

• Key Policies and Agreements:

- » Single Market & Customs Union: Ensures free trade among members.
- » **EU Green Deal:** Aims for carbon neutrality by 2050.
- » Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): Coordinates diplomatic actions.





» Digital Services Act & Digital Markets Act: Regulates tech companies.

India-EU Relations for UPSC Mains:

- » The EU is India's largest trading partner, surpassing the US and China.
- » India and the EU are negotiating an FTA to boost trade and investment.
- » The EU-India Strategic Partnership (2020) focuses on sustainable development, security, and digital transformation.
- » India collaborates with the EU on climate action, renewable energy, and cybersecurity.

Final Takeaways for UPSC

- The EU is one of the most integrated regional organizations globally, influencing international trade, security, and law.
- For Prelims, focus on EU institutions. treaties, and major policies.
- For Mains, prepare answers on India-EU trade relations, strategic partnerships, and geopolitical significance.
- The EU's role in Ukraine, Brexit, and global climate agreements is crucial for current affairs.

2.1.6 Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

Name of the Organization

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The EAEU is an international economic union comprising five post-Soviet states in Eurasia. It facilitates the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor among member countries and pursues coordinated economic policies.

Year of Formation

Established by the Treaty on the Eurasian

Economic Union signed on May 29, 2014, the EAEU officially came into existence on January 1, 2015.

Why they formed it?

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, former Soviet republics faced significant economic challenges due to the sudden transition to independent states. The EAEU was conceived to reintegrate these economies, aiming to restore economic ties and create a cohesive economic entity in the region.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Moscow, Russia

Members

• The EAEU comprises five member states:

Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia

Who are its members?

Membership is open to post-Soviet states that seek economic integration and are willing to coordinate policies in various sectors. While the founding members are Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined shortly after the union's establishment.

India's Membership

No - India is not in the EAEU (which is a customs union of former Soviet states like Russia, Kazakhstan, etc.). (India is negotiating trade agreements but is not an EAEU member.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

The EAEU aims to:





- » Create a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor.
- » Coordinate economic policies among member states.
- » Eliminate non-tariff trade barriers.
- » Harmonize regulations across various sectors.
- » Modernize member economies through collaborative efforts.

Recent Activities

- **2023:** The EAEU initiated negotiations with India to establish a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), aiming to strengthen economic ties and expand market access.
- **2024:** The EAEU continued to focus on digital transformation, emphasizing the implementation of its Digital Agenda by 2025 to drive economic growth and integration.
- **2025:** Internal reports indicated challenges in deepening integration due to external pressures and the need for strategic patience in maintaining influence over member states.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Digital Transformation:** The EAEU is actively pursuing its Digital Agenda by 2025, focusing on transitioning to a digital economy as a key driver of growth.
- **Geopolitical Dynamics:** Recent reports suggest that Western sanctions and economic pressures have posed challenges to the EAEU's cohesion, influencing member states' economic policies and integration efforts.

India-Specific Developments

- FTA Negotiations: In 2023, India and the EAEU commenced discussions on a Free Trade Agreement to enhance bilateral trade and investment opportunities.
- **Industrial Cooperation:** Both parties

are developing an industrial cooperation plan to align various sectors, serving as a precursor to the potential FTA.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: The EAEU seeks to integrate economies of post-Soviet states, focusing on economic rather than political union, distinguishing it from entities like the European Union.
- **Similar Organizations:** Comparable to the EU in its pursuit of economic integration, the EAEU differs by concentrating on harmonizing economic policies without delving into political integration.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: The EAEU has been referenced in questions related to international economic organizations, regional trade agreements, and India's foreign trade policies.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Understanding the EAEU's formation, objectives, and member states is crucial for topics on international relations and global economic structures.
- » Awareness of ongoing FTA negotiations between India and the EAEU is essential for discussions on India's trade strategies and geopolitical interests.

2.1.7 **SAARC**

Name of the Organization

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

SAARC is a regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union in South Asia. It aims to promote economic and regional integration, as well as to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development





among its member states.

Year of Formation

Established on December 8, 1985, during the first SAARC Summit in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Why they formed it?

The idea of regional cooperation in South Asia was discussed in the late 1970s to foster mutual trust and understanding among neighboring countries. The founding members recognized the potential for collective economic and social development, leading to the formal establishment of SAARC in 1985.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Kathmandu, Nepal

Members

SAARC comprises eight member states:

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Membership is open to countries located in South Asia that are willing to accept the organization's charter and objectives.

Who are its members?

• Afghanistan became the eighth member in 2007.

India's Membership

Yes – India is a founding member of SAARC (since 1985) and one of its 8 members.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **SAARC's primary objectives include:**
 - » Promoting the welfare of the peoples of

- South Asia and improving their quality of life.
- » Accelerating economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region.
- » Strengthening collective self-reliance among member countries.
- » Contributing to mutual trust. understanding, and appreciation of one another's problems.
- » Promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance in economic, social, cultural, technical, and scientific fields.
- » Strengthening cooperation with other developing countries.
- » Strengthening cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interest.
- » Cooperating with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Recent Activities

- **2021:** SAARC and the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen regional cooperation in sustainable energy development.
- **2023:** Ambassador Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar of Bangladesh assumed office as the Secretary General of SAARC on October 25, 2023.
- **2025:** The SAARC Secretariat celebrated Staff Day on January 25, 2025, fostering a sense of community among staff and their families.

Recent News & Initiatives

- The South Asian University held its twelfth Governing Board Meeting, discussing future initiatives and reforms to enhance educational collaboration among member states.
- SAARC has faced challenges in convening





its 19th summit due to geopolitical tensions, particularly between India and Pakistan, affecting the organization's ability to hold regular high-level meetings.

India-Specific Developments

- India remains committed to regional development through SAARC but has promoting inter-regional been cooperation through platforms such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).
- India's geopolitical influence within SAARC has been contrasted with Indonesia's proactive role in ASEAN, highlighting challenges India faces in fostering regional cooperation.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unique Aspects: SAARC is unique in its composition, bringing together eight South Asian countries with shared cultural and historical ties. However, political especially tensions. between and Pakistan, have often hindered its effectiveness.
- Similar **Organizations:** Compared to ASEAN, which has seen significant economic integration among Southeast Asian nations, SAARC has struggled to achieve similar levels of cooperation, partly due to internal political disputes.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: SAARC has been a topic in UPSC examinations, particularly concerning its role in regional cooperation, challenges faced due to member state relations, and India's involvement in the organization.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Understanding SAARC's objectives, member countries, and organizational structure is crucial.
- » Awareness of recent developments, such

- as leadership changes and challenges in convening summits, is important for current affairs.
- » Comparative analysis with other regional organizations like ASEAN can provide insights into regional cooperation dynamics.

Staying updated on SAARC's activities and India's role within the organization

Importance for Prelims:

- » SAARC's founding year (1985),headquarters (Kathmandu, Nepal), and member countries are factual details often asked in UPSC Prelims.
- » Ouestions on regional economic groupings frequently appear, and SAARC's agreements (like SAFTA - South Asian Free Trade Area) are important for international trade-related questions.
- » SAARC's relations with other regional organizations like ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and SCO have been UPSC focus areas.

Importance for Mains:

- » In GS Paper II (International Relations), SAARC is relevant for topics related to regional cooperation, India's foreign policy, and multilateral organizations.
- » Challenges in SAARC's effectiveness due to India-Pakistan tensions, lack of implementation of agreements, and its comparison with ASEAN are frequently debated in IR questions.
- » The future of SAARC and its alternatives like BIMSTEC are often discussed in UPSC Mains and Essay papers.
- » India's role in SAARC is an essential part of India's Neighbourhood First Policy and Act East Policy.

Current Affairs and Analytical Aspects:

» The stagnation of SAARC and the shift towards BIMSTEC as a more effective regional platform is an important development.

- » The geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan affecting SAARC Summits is a key area to track.
- » The 19th SAARC Summit delay (originally scheduled for 2016) highlights the diplomatic challenges within organization.
- » The SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Fund (initiated by India) showed regional cooperation despite tensions.
- » The role of China (which has observer status in SAARC) and its growing influence in South Asia is an evolving issue.

Final Takeaways for UPSC Exam

- SAARC is important for understanding India's regional diplomacy and its efforts toward economic integration in South Asia.
- Despite its limited success, SAARC's agreements like SAFTA and regional energy cooperation remain relevant for international trade and economic development discussions.
- Comparing SAARC with ASEAN, BIMSTEC, and SCO provides an analytical perspective that is useful for UPSC Mains answers.
- Tracking India's evolving approach to SAARC, including its focus on BIMSTEC as an alternative, is crucial for current affairs.

2.1.8 BIMSTEC

Name of the Organization

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

BIMSTEC is a regional intergovernmental organization that aims to promote technological and economic cooperation among countries bordering the Bay of Bengal. It serves as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, facilitating

collaboration across multiple sectors to enhance economic growth, social progress, and regional integration.

Year of Formation

• Established on June 6, 1997, through the Bangkok Declaration.

Why they formed it?

In the mid-1990s, nations in South and Southeast Asia recognized the potential benefits of regional cooperation to address common challenges and harness shared resources. The formation of BIMSTEC was driven by the desire to enhance economic development, improve connectivity, and strengthen economic ties among member countries, thereby fostering peace and prosperity in the region.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Dhaka, Bangladesh

Members

• BIMSTEC comprises seven member states:

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal , Sri Lanka , Thailand

Who are its members?

Membership is based on geographical proximity to the Bay of Bengal and a shared interest in regional cooperation. Notably, BIMSTEC includes countries from both South Asia and Southeast Asia, providing a unique platform for inter-regional collaboration.

India's Membership

Yes – India co-founded BIMSTEC in 1997 and is an active member.



What it does (Key Objectives)

• BIMSTEC aims to:

- » Create an enabling environment for rapid economic development through the identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects.
- » Accelerate social progress in the region through joint endeavors in a spirit of equality and partnership.
- » Promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in areas such as trade, investment, technology, energy, transportation, tourism, and fisheries.
- The organization operates through 14 priority sectors, each led by a member country:
 - » Trade and Investment
 - » Technology
 - » Energy
 - » Transport and Communication
 - » Tourism
 - » Fisheries
 - » Agriculture
 - » Public Health
 - » Poverty Alleviation
 - » Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime
 - » Environment and Disaster Management
 - » People-to-People Contact
 - » Cultural Cooperation
 - » Climate Change
- India leads the sectors on Transport and Communication, Tourism, Environment and Disaster Management, and Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime.

Recent Activities

• 2022: Adoption of the BIMSTEC Master

Plan for Transport Connectivity, outlining a comprehensive 10-year strategy to enhance regional transport linkages.

2024:

- India organized the first BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship on February
 aiming to foster sports cooperation among member countries.
- » The Fourth Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC was held in June, focusing on strategic recommendations for the organization's future.

2025:

- » The 1st BIMSTEC Youth Summit took place in Gandhinagar, India, from February 7-11, bringing together young leaders to discuss regional challenges and opportunities.
- » ThailandisscheduledtohosttheBIMSTEC Summit from April 2-4, providing a platform for leaders to discuss regional cooperation and integration.

Recent News & Initiatives

- In February 2025, the BIMSTEC Digital Conclave was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, focusing on advancing digital public infrastructure in the region.
- The BIMSTEC Trade Facilitation Strategic Framework 2030 was published in December 2022, outlining strategies to reduce non-tariff barriers and enhance intra-regional trade.

India-Specific Developments

- India has been proactive in strengthening BIMSTEC by hosting key events such as the BIMSTEC Aquatic Championship in 2024 and the BIMSTEC Youth Summit in 2025, underscoring its commitment to regional cooperation.
- India continues to lead initiatives in sectors like counterterrorism, telecommunication, and transport, playing a pivotal role in



shaping BIMSTEC's agenda.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects:

- Bridge Between South and Southeast Asia: Unlike SAARC, which is limited to South Asia, BIMSTEC includes both South and Southeast Asian nations (such as Thailand and Myanmar), making it a unique inter-regional cooperation platform.
- Focus on the Bay of Bengal Region: BIMSTEC is not just a political group but also a maritime cooperation framework, focusing on economic and security concerns related to the Bay of Bengal.
- **Sector-Specific Cooperation:** BIMSTEC has 14 priority sectors, each led by a member country, ensuring a more decentralized and participatory approach to regional development.
- More Functional than SAARC: While SAARC remains largely inactive due to India-Pakistan tensions, BIMSTEC is increasingly being seen as a viable alternative for regional economic and security collaboration.

Similar Organizations:

- SAARC (South Asian Association for **Regional Cooperation):**
 - » BIMSTEC is more effective than SAARC because it avoids bilateral conflicts (especially between India and Pakistan), which have stalled SAARC summits.
 - » SAARC includes Pakistan, Afghanistan, but BIMSTEC excludes them, making cooperation smoother.
 - » BIMSTEC has recently gained prominence as India actively promotes it over SAARC.
- ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations):
 - » ASEAN is more integrated, with a focus on a single market, whereas BIMSTEC is still evolving in terms of trade integration.

- » BIMSTEC's members are at different economic levels, whereas ASEAN has more uniform development among its members.
- » Security Cooperation in BIMSTEC is growing—India is leading BIMSTEC's counterterrorism and transnational crime initiatives.
- **IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association):**

IORA focuses more broadly on the entire Indian Ocean region, while BIMSTEC is centered on the Bay of Bengal.

BIMSTEC has deeper political and security cooperation, while IORA is more trade- and economy-focused.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

- BIMSTEC has been a topic in UPSC Prelims and Mains, particularly in India's foreign policy, regional cooperation, and economic diplomacy.
- Past questions have asked about:
 - » BIMSTEC's member countries and its headquarters.
 - differs » How **BIMSTEC** from SAARC ASEAN. and India's role in BIMSTEC and its strategic importance.
 - opportunities » Challenges and for regional economic integration.

Key Facts for UPSC Exams:

- For Prelims:
 - » Headquarters: Dhaka, Bangladesh.
 - » Founding Year: 1997 (Bangkok Declaration).
 - **Countries:** » Member 7 (India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand).
 - » **Key Sectors:** 14 priority areas, with India leading Counter-Terrorism, Transport, and Environment.

- » Comparison with SAARC and ASEAN.
- For Mains (GS Paper II International Relations):
 - » BIMSTEC vs SAARC: India's shift in focus from SAARC to BIMSTEC due to Pakistan's obstructionist policies.
 - » Economic Importance: Bay of Bengal's role as a maritime trade corridor connecting South Asia and ASEAN.
 - » Security Cooperation: India's leadership in counterterrorism and military exercises like MILEX-18.

» Challenges:

- ☐ Slow implementation of trade and connectivity projects.
- ☐ China's growing influence in Myanmar and Indian Ocean diplomacy.
- ☐ Political instability in Myanmar affecting regional integration.
- For Essay and Interview:
 - » "BIMSTEC: A New Dawn for Regional Cooperation in South Asia".
 - » "India's Shift from SAARC to BIMSTEC: Regional Diplomacy in Action".
 - » "Geopolitical Challenges in BIMSTEC: Can it Succeed where SAARC Failed?".

Final Takeaways for UPSC Exam

- BIMSTEC is an evolving regional organization that India is prioritizing as an alternative to SAARC.
- Its focus on the Bay of Bengal region, economic connectivity, and security cooperation makes it geopolitically significant.
- India's active participation in BIMSTEC provides an opportunity to counter China's influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.
- UPSC exams should closely track developments related to trade agreements, maritime security, and BIMSTEC summits.

BIMSTEC is expected to play a crucial role in India's "**Act East Policy,**" making it a high-priority topic for UPSC International Relations.

2.1.9 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Name of the Organization

• Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The GCC is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries bordering the Persian Gulf. It aims to achieve unity among its members through common objectives and similar political and cultural identities rooted in Arab and Islamic cultures.

Year of Formation

• Established in May 1981.

Why they formed it?

The GCC was formed to foster regional cooperation and coordination in response to shared economic, social, and political challenges. The geographical proximity and cultural similarities among member states facilitated the establishment of this council.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

• Active.

Headquarters

• Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Members

The GCC comprises six member states:

Bahrain Kuwait Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia United Arab Emirates

Who are its members?





Membership is based on geographical proximity to the Persian Gulf and shared cultural and political identities. The council exclusively comprises Arab monarchies, reflecting a common governance structure.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (the GCC is a bloc of six Gulf Arab states). (India maintains close ties and dialogue with the GCC but isn't part of the Council.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The GCC aims to:
 - » Enhance coordination, integration, and inter-connection among member states in all fields.
 - » Strengthen ties among their people.
 - » Formulate similar regulations in various fields such as economy, finance, trade, customs, tourism, legislation, administration.
 - » Foster scientific and technical progress in industry, mining, agriculture, water, and animal resources.
 - » Establish scientific research centers.
 - » Set up joint ventures.
 - » Encourage cooperation of the private sector.
 - » Strengthen economic and financial relations, including the creation of a common market and customs union.

Recent Activities

- 2023: The GCC and Pakistan signed a preliminary free trade agreement in September, aiming to enhance economic ties between the member states and Pakistan.
- 2023: The first GCC-ASEAN Summit was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, marking a significant step in fostering relations between the Gulf and Southeast Asian nations.

- **2024:** The inaugural GCC-European Union Summit took place in Brussels, Belgium, co-chaired by Charles Michel and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, under the theme "Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity."
- 2024: New Zealand finalized a trade agreement with the GCC, aiming to eliminate tariffs on a significant portion of New Zealand's exports to the Gulf region.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Economic Diversification:** The countries have been implementing reforms to accelerate economic transformation and diversification, unlocking growth in sectors such as tourism, logistics, finance, and renewable energy.
- Education Reforms: Improving the quality of education has been identified as critical for sustained economic growth in the GCC region. Efforts are underway to enhance educational outcomes to support economic diversification.
- **Trade Negotiations:** Turkey aims to finalize free trade agreement negotiations with the GCC by the end of 2024, focusing on enhancing economic ties and cooperation in various sectors.

India-Specific Developments

While specific recent developments between India and the GCC within the last two years are not detailed in the provided sources, historically, India has maintained strong economic and cultural ties with GCC countries. The relationship encompasses trade, energy cooperation, and a significant Indian expatriate community in the Gulf region.

Comparison with other Orgs (Unique Aspects vs. Similar Organizations in the Arab Region)

Unique Aspects of GCC:

• **Political and Economic Integration:** The





GCC focuses on both economic cooperation (like a customs union and common market) and political coordination, unlike some other Arab organizations that focus only on political or cultural issues.

- Exclusive Membership of Arab Monarchies: Unlike other Arab regional bodies, the GCC only includes monarchies, ensuring greater political alignment and stability.
- Strong Defense and Security Cooperation: The GCC has its own joint military force (Peninsula Shield Force), giving it a stronger security dimension compared to other Arab economic organizations.

Similar Organizations in the Arab Region:

- 1. Arab League (League of Arab States)
- **Founded:** 1945
- **Members:** 22 Arab countries, including all GCC states.

Differences from GCC:

- » The Arab League is political and cultural, whereas the GCC is more economic and strategic.
- » The Arab League includes both republics and monarchies, while the GCC is exclusively for monarchies.
- » The Arab League has been less effective in conflict resolution, while the GCC has intervened in regional security matters (e.g., Yemen).

2. Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)

- Founded: 1989
- Members: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia (North African Arab nations).

• Differences from GCC:

- » AMU focuses on economic integration among North African Arab countries, while GCC focuses on Persian Gulf states.
- » AMU has been largely inactive due to

political differences, while GCC has implemented more tangible economic cooperation.

3 . Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- **Founded:** 1969
- **Members:** 57 Muslim-majority countries (including GCC states).

• Differences from GCC:

- » OIC is a global Islamic organization, while the GCC is a regional bloc for Arab monarchies.
- » OIC promotes Islamic solidarity and cooperation, whereas GCC is focused on economic and strategic integration.

4. Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU)

- **Founded:** 1964
- **Members:** 18 Arab nations (including some GCC members).

• Differences from GCC:

- » CAEU's goal is a Pan-Arab economic union, while GCC is more exclusive and practical in implementing economic policies.
- » CAEU has faced difficulties due to political divisions, while GCC has successfully created a customs union and common market.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions

 The GCC has been covered in UPSC questions on international groupings, trade blocs, and India's Middle East policy.

• Previous questions have focused on:

- » GCC's formation, objectives, and members.
- » Comparison of GCC with Arab League and OIC.
- » India-GCC trade relations and energy dependence.



Key Facts for UPSC Exams

- **Headquarters:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- Member States: 6 Arab monarchies (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE).
- **Economic Role:** Oil-based economies with growing diversification efforts.
- Security Cooperation: Peninsula Shield Force (GCC's military alliance).
- **India-GCC Relations:** GCC is India's largest trading partner in the Middle East (oil trade, remittances from Indian workers, investment ties).

For Prelims

- Memorize GCC members, headquarters, and founding year (1981).
- Understand GCC vs. Arab League and CAEU.

For Mains (GS Paper II - International Relations)

- GCC's importance for India (trade, energy, diaspora).
- GCC's role in regional security (Qatar blockade, Yemen war).
- Economic diversification in GCC (Saudi Vision 2030, UAE investments in India).
- Comparison with Arab League and other regional blocs.

Final Takeaways for UPSC

- GCC is a critical economic and strategic bloc in the Arab world, distinct from other organizations due to its exclusive membership of monarchies and focus on economic and defense integration.
- India's relations with the GCC are highly significant, given its dependence on Gulf oil and remittances.
- Understanding GCC's security role, geopolitical economic reforms, and dynamics (like Iran-GCC tensions) is crucial for both Prelims and Mains.

Comparing GCC with the Arab League, OIC, and CAEU provides deeper insights into regional Arab diplomacy and trade alliances.

2.1.10 East African Community (EAC)

Name of the Organization

• East African Community (EAC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organization that aims to promote economic, political, social, and cultural integration among its member states to enhance regional stability and development.

Year of Formation

• Originally established in 1967, the EAC was dissolved in 1977 due to political disagreements. It was re-established on 7th July 2000 following the signing of the Treaty for its re-establishment in 1999.

Why they formed it?

Historical **Context:** The initial formation in 1967 was driven by the desire for regional cooperation among Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The reestablishment in 2000 aimed to revive and enhance this cooperation to address common challenges and harness shared opportunities.

• Reasons:

- » Promote sustainable economic growth and development.
- » Strengthen political, economic, and social ties.
- » Enhance regional peace and security.
- » Facilitate free movement of goods, services, and people.





Type

Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Arusha, Tanzania.

Members

Number of Members: 8 Partner States.

Full List:

Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

• Criteria for Membership:

- » Geographical proximity to East Africa.
- » Adherence to universally accepted principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.
- » Willingness to support the objectives of the EAC.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership is open to neighboring countries that meet the set criteria and are willing to adopt the community's policies and programs.

Notable Inclusions:

- » Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Admitted on 29th March 2022, expanding the EAC's reach to the Atlantic coast.
- » Somalia: Admitted on 24th November 2023, becoming a full member on 4th March 2024.

India's Membership

No - Not a member (EAC is only East African nations).

What it does (Key Objectives)

Key Objectives:

- » Establish a customs union, common market, monetary union, and ultimately a political federation.
- » Enhance cooperation in political, economic, social, and cultural fields.
- » Promote peace, security, and stability within the region.
- » Facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.

Areas of Work:

- » **Economic Integration:** Implementation of the Customs Union (2005) and Common Market (2010) protocols.
- » **Infrastructure Development:** Projects like the East African Railway Master Plan and regional road networks.
- » Social Sectors: Collaboration in health, education, and culture.
- » Political Affairs: Efforts towards harmonizing foreign security and policies.

Recent Activities

• Membership Changes:

» Somalia's Accession: Admitted on 24th November 2023: became a full member on 4th March 2024.

Major Resolutions:

» Data Governance Harmonization: In December 2024, the EAC initiated efforts to harmonize data governance frameworks across member states to facilitate cross-border data flows.

Governance Updates:

» **Leadership:** In November 2024, Kenyan President William Ruto was elected as the new chairperson of the EAC Summit, succeeding South Sudan's President Salva Kiir.



Recent News & Initiatives

- **Peace Efforts in Eastern DRC:** The EAC has been actively involved in addressing the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, urging for combined regional and broader peace initiatives.
- **Digital Integration:** Steps have been taken to harmonize data governance frameworks to accelerate regional digital integration and facilitate cross-border data flows.

India-Specific Developments

While specific recent developments between India and the EAC within the last two years are not detailed in the provided sources, historically, India has maintained strong economic and cultural ties with EAC countries. The relationship encompasses trade, investment, and capacity-building initiatives.

Comparison with other Orgs (Continued)

Unique Aspects of EAC

Geographical Scope:

- » The EAC uniquely connects East Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean (with the inclusion of the DRC).
- » This expansion makes it one of the largest regional economic blocs in Africa, spanning 8 countries with a combined population of over 300 million people.

Advanced Economic Integration:

- » The EAC is ahead of most African regional blocs in terms of integration, having implemented:
- » A Customs Union (2005) eliminating internal tariffs.
- » A Common Market (2010) allowing free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.
- » A proposed Monetary Union aiming for a single currency by 2031.

Political Federation Goal:

» Unlike ECOWAS or SADC, the EAC explicitly aims for a political federation (United States of East Africa), making it a unique experiment in Africa.

• Military and Security Cooperation:

» The EACRF (East African Community Regional Force) was deployed to eastern DRC to tackle armed conflicts—a rare example of military coordination in an economic bloc.

Similar Organizations in Africa

African Union (AU)

- » EAC is a sub-regional bloc within the AU.
- » AU focuses on continental cooperation, while EAC is more integrated at the regional level.

Southern African **Development Community (SADC)**

- » SADC is larger (16 members) but less integrated economically than the EAC.
- » Unlike the EAC, SADC does not plan for a political federation.

• Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

- » ECOWAS is also working toward a monetary union, similar to the EAC.
- » However, ECOWAS has struggled with political instability (e.g., coups in Mali, Niger, Guinea), whereas the EAC has been relatively stable.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on EAC and Related **Topics**

• EAC's integration process has been referenced in questions on regional economic blocs.

UPSC has previously asked about:

» African Union vs. sub-regional blocs like EAC and ECOWAS.



- » India's engagement with Africa and regional trade blocs.
- » The role of EAC in Africa's economic transformation.

Key Facts for UPSC Exams

- Headquarters: Arusha, Tanzania.
- **Formation:** First formed in 1967, dissolved in 1977, re-established in 2000.
- Members: 8 (Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda).

• Key Agreements:

- » Customs Union (2005)
- » Common Market (2010)
- » Monetary Union (planned for 2031)
- » Political Federation (long-term goal) Recent Additions: DRC (2022), Somalia (2024).

Final Takeaways for UPSC

- EAC is one of the most advanced regional integration blocs in Africa, aiming for a political federation and a single currency.
- India has growing economic ties with EAC nations, especially in infrastructure, trade, and healthcare.
- EAC's expansion to include the DRC and Somalia highlights its ambition to become Africa's leading economic and political union.
- For UPSC, understanding EAC's integration model is crucial, as it provides insights into regionalism, economic blocs, and South-South cooperation.

Keeping an eye on EAC's progress in implementing a monetary union, expanding trade, and political integration will be key for current affairs and international relations preparation.

2.1.11 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

Name of the Organization

• Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The Pacific Islands Forum is an intergovernmental organization that aims to enhance cooperation among countries and territories of the Pacific Ocean. It serves as a platform for member nations to collaborate on regional issues, including economic development, political stability, environmental sustainability, and security.

Year of Formation

• Established in 1971.

Why they formed it?

 Historical Context: In the early 1970s, Pacific nations recognized the need for a unified platform to address shared challenges and to amplify their collective voice on the global stage.

• Reasons:

- » Promote regional cooperation and integration.
- » Address common issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and security.
- » Strengthen political and economic ties among member countries.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

Suva, Fiji.

Members

• **Number of Members:** 18 member countries and territories.



Full List:

Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

• Criteria for Membership:

- » Geographical location within the Pacific region.
- » Commitment to the Forum's principles and objectives.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership extended to sovereign states and territories in the Pacific region that demonstrate a commitment to the Forum's goals of regional cooperation and development.

Notable Inclusions:

» Australia and New Zealand: As developed nations, their inclusion brings significant economic and political influence to the Forum.

Notable Exclusions:

» Taiwan: Due to the One-China policy, Taiwan is not a member, despite its interest and engagement in the region.

India's Membership

No – Not a member (PIF is for Pacific Island countries, plus Australia/NZ).

What it does (Key Objectives)

• Key Objectives:

- » Foster economic growth and sustainable development.
- » Enhance political governance and security.
- » Promote social inclusion and cultural identity.
- » Address environmental challenges, particularly climate change.

Areas of Work:

- » **Economic Development:** Facilitating agreements and economic integration among member states.
- » Political Cooperation: Advocating for democratic governance and human rights.
- » **Security:** Collaborating on regional security initiatives address to transnational crimes and enhance maritime security.
- » Environmental **Sustainability:** Implementing strategies to combat climate change and promote renewable energy.

Recent Activities

• Membership Changes:

» In August 2024, Guam and American Samoa were accepted as associate members.

• Major Resolutions:

» 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent: Launched in July 2022, long-term strategy outlines commitments across seven focus areas, including political leadership, economic development, and climate change.

Governance Updates:

» In August 2024, during the Forum in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, leaders discussed enhancing regional security addressing climate change impacts.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Regional Policing Initiative: In August 2024, the Forum endorsed a plan to boost police numbers among member nations to reduce reliance on external forces during crises. This initiative, primarily funded by Australia with a \$400 million contribution over five years, aims to address issues like drug trafficking and illegal fishing.
- Climate Change Advocacy: Pacific island





nations have been urging Australia to take significant action against climate change, emphasizing the need to transition away from fossil fuels.

 Geopolitical Engagements: The Forum has seen increased diplomatic interest from major powers, including the United States and China, leading to discussions on regional security and development partnerships.

India-Specific Developments

- Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC):
 - » India launched FIPIC in 2014 to strengthen ties with Pacific Island countries, many of which are members of PIF.
 - » The third FIPIC Summit was held in May 2023 in Papua New Guinea, where PM Narendra Modi announced several key initiatives, including:
 - ☐ Digital infrastructure development for Pacific nations.
 - ☐ Climate change mitigation projects.
 - ☐ Healthcare and renewable energy investments.

• Climate Change Collaboration:

» India has supported PIF countries' climate adaptation efforts, including providing funding and technological assistance for solar energy and coastal protection projects.

• Economic and Strategic Cooperation:

- » India has extended trade and investment incentives to Pacific nations, focusing on sustainable fisheries, agriculture, and IT development.
- » India is working on expanding maritime security cooperation with Pacific nations to ensure freedom of navigation and counter illegal fishing activities.

Geopolitical Engagements:

- » With the increasing Chinese influence in the Pacific, India has been enhancing diplomatic outreach to Pacific nations.
- » India has been active in the Indo-Pacific narrative and has expressed support for PIF's climate and sustainable development goals in international forums.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects of PIF

• Strong Climate Advocacy:

» The Pacific Islands Forum is one of the strongest international voices on climate change, calling for urgent global action due to rising sea levels threatening its member states.

• Economic Cooperation & Trade Integration:

» PIF facilitates regional trade agreements like the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus, promoting economic integration among Pacific nations, Australia, and New Zealand.

• Security Cooperation:

- » PIF works on maritime security, including efforts to counter illegal fishing, human trafficking, and transnational crimes.
- » The Pacific Islands Regional Security Declaration (2018) reinforces regional security priorities.

Similar Organizations in the Pacific Region

1. Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG):

• **Founded:** 1988

- Members: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia's Kanak independence movement.
- **Focus:** Mainly on political and trade relations among Melanesian countries.
- Difference from PIF: Smaller scope, focused on Melanesian ethnic and economic interests, whereas PIF includes



both large and small Pacific nations.

2. Pacific Community (SPC):

Founded: 1947

- Members: 27 (including Australia, France, and the USA).
- **Focus:** Scientific and technical cooperation, covering climate research, health, and natural resource management.
- **Difference from PIF:** SPC is not a political bloc—it provides technical assistance, while PIF deals with political and economic policies.

3. Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) (India's Engagement in the Indo-Pacific):

• **Founded:** 1997

- **Members:** 23 countries (including Australia, India, and some Pacific states).
- Focus: Trade, maritime security, blue economy.
- **Difference from PIF:** IORA includes Indian Ocean countries, whereas PIF focuses only on Pacific nations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on PIF and Related **Topics**

- UPSC has previously asked about:
 - » India's engagement with Pacific Island nations.
 - » Regional economic Indo-Pacific. groupings in the The role of PIF in global climate diplomacy.
 - » Comparisons between PIF, ASEAN, and IORA in regional security and trade cooperation.

Key Facts for UPSC Exams

Headquarters: Suva, Fiji.

Founded: 1971.

• Number of Members: 18 (including Australia and New Zealand).

- Major Trade Agreement: PACER Plus (Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations).
- **Key Climate Change Advocacy: 2050** Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
- **Security Cooperation:** Pacific Islands Regional Security Declaration (2018).
- India's Engagement: FIPIC, renewable energy assistance, Indo-Pacific maritime security.

How to Approach PIF in UPSC Exam For Prelims

- Memorize PIF's headquarters, members, and key climate initiatives (e.g., 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent).
- Know India's FIPIC initiatives and climate commitments in the Pacific.

For Mains (GS Paper II - International Relations)

- PIF's role in Indo-Pacific geopolitics.
- Comparison of PIF with other regional organizations (e.g., ASEAN, IORA).
- India's strategic, economic, and climate engagement with PIF nations.
- The significance of Pacific Island nations in global climate negotiations.

2.1.12 Arctic Council

Name of the Organization

Arctic Council

What it is (Nature and Function)

Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum that promotes cooperation, coordination, and interaction among Arctic states, Indigenous communities, and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, particularly sustainable development and environmental protection.



Year of Formation

Established on September 19, 1996, through the Ottawa Declaration.

Why they formed it?

Historical **Context:** Prior to the Arctic Council's formation, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was adopted in 1991 by the eight Arctic nations to address environmental concerns.

Reasons for Formation:

- » Enhance cooperation among Arctic states and Indigenous communities.
- » Address challenges environmental unique to the Arctic region.
- » Promote sustainable development and environmental protection.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• The Arctic Council Secretariat is located in Tromsø, Norway.

Members

- **Number of Members:** Eight Arctic states.
- Full List:

Canada, Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, United States

• Criteria for Membership:

» Sovereign states with territory in the Arctic region.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership is limited to nations with Arctic territory, ensuring that decisions are made by those directly affected by Arctic policies.

- Permanent **Participants:** Six organizations representing Indigenous Arctic peoples have Permanent Participant status, allowing them full consultation rights in the Council's deliberations.
- **Observers:** Non-Arctic states. intergovernmental and interparliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations can obtain observer status, allowing them to attend meetings and contribute to the Council's work.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member (only the 8 Arctic states are members). However, India is an Observer to the Arctic Council (granted observer status in 2013).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Key Objectives:**
 - » Promote cooperation among Arctic states and Indigenous communities.
 - » Ensure sustainable development in the Arctic region.
 - » Protect the Arctic environment.

Areas of Work:

- » Environmental Protection: Addressing issues like climate change, pollution, and biodiversity conservation.
- » Sustainable Development: Focusing on economic and social development that benefits Arctic inhabitants.
- » Scientific Cooperation: Facilitating research and sharing knowledge on Arctic-related topics.
- » Emergency **Preparedness:** Coordinating responses environmental emergencies and natural disasters.

Recent Activities



• Chairmanship Transitions:

- » Russia held the Chairmanship from 2021 to 2023.
- » Norway assumed the Chairmanship in 2023, set to continue until 2025.

• Impact of Geopolitical Events:

- » In March 2022, seven member states paused participation in Arctic Council meetings due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- » In June 2022, these states resumed limited cooperation on projects not involving Russian leadership.

• Resumption of Activities:

» Despite geopolitical tensions, the Council has continued its work, with Norway facilitating discussions and projects focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development.

Recent News & Initiatives

• Strategic Plan:

» The Council adopted a strategic plan outlining goals for sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and enhanced cooperation among member states.

• Scientific Cooperation:

» Ongoing efforts to enhance international Arctic scientific cooperation, including agreements facilitating research and data sharing among member states.

• Environmental Assessments:

» Release of reports and assessments on topics such as climate change, Arctic shipping, and biodiversity, providing valuable data for policymakers and researchers.

India-Specific Developments

Observer Status:

» India, an observer since 2013, continues

to engage in Arctic Council activities, contributing to scientific research and participating in meetings.

• Scientific Research:

» India has been involved in Arctic research, focusing on climate change, environmental monitoring, and polar sciences, aligning with the Council's objectives.

Policy Engagement:

» India has expressed interest in collaborating on sustainable development initiatives in the Arctic, recognizing the global implications of Arctic environmental changes.

• India's Arctic Policy (2022):

- » India released its first Arctic Policy in March 2022, titled "India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development."
- » This policy aligns with Arctic Council objectives, focusing on:
 - ☐ Climate and environmental protection in the Arctic.
 - □ Scientific research and cooperation in polar studies.
 - ☐ Sustainable economic and resource development in Arctic regions.
 - ☐ Strengthening India's role as an observer state in the Arctic Council.

• Himadri Research Station (India's Arctic Research Base):

- » Located in Svalbard, Norway, it is India's permanent Arctic research station.
- » Operated by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa.
- » Conducts research on climate change, glaciers, biodiversity, and Arctic weather patterns.

• Kanchan Satellite for Arctic Monitoring:

» India has been working on using satellite-based monitoring systems to



track glacial melt, sea ice movements, and atmospheric conditions in the Arctic.

India's Role in Arctic Council Working Groups:

 India actively contributes to Arctic Council scientific projects and environmental studies.

• India is particularly interested in:

- ☐ Arctic climate studies (impact of melting ice on monsoons).
- ☐ Impact of Arctic changes on global weather patterns.
- ☐ Sustainable development opportunities (especially shipping routes through the Arctic).

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects of Arctic Council

Non-Military Nature:

» Unlike NATO or other security alliances, the Arctic Council strictly focuses on environmental and scientific cooperation, avoiding military issues.

Permanent Participants (Indigenous Representation):

» Unlike most intergovernmental organizations, the Arctic Council grants Indigenous groups a formal voice in decision-making, recognizing their deep connection to Arctic ecosystems.

Consensus-Based Decision-Making:

» Unlike majority-vote-based organizations, the Arctic Council requires unanimous agreement from all member states for policy decisions.

Similar Organizations in Polar and Environmental Cooperation

1. Antarctic Treaty System (ATS):

• Founded: 1959

 Focus: Governs Antarctica, ensuring scientific cooperation and environmental protection.

• Comparison with Arctic Council:

- » ATS bans military activity, while the Arctic Council does not cover military issues.
- » ATS applies to an uninhabited continent, while the Arctic Council focuses on regions inhabited by Indigenous peoples and Arctic communities.

2. International Maritime Organization (IMO):

• **Focus:** Regulation of Arctic and Antarctic shipping routes (e.g., Polar Code for safe Arctic navigation).

• Comparison with Arctic Council:

» The IMO deals specifically with maritime rules, while Arctic Council has a broader environmental and socio-economic focus.

3. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

• **Focus:** Climate research on a global scale, including the Arctic and Antarctic.

• Comparison with Arctic Council:

» The IPCC conducts global climate studies, while the Arctic Council focuses only on Arctic-specific climate and environmental changes.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on Arctic Council and Related Topics

• UPSC has previously asked about:

- » Arctic Council's objectives and role in environmental protection.
- » India's observer status in Arctic Council and its engagement in polar research.
- » Comparisons between Arctic Council, Antarctic Treaty, and other environmental organizations.
- » The impact of Arctic ice melt on global climate and India's monsoon patterns.



Key Facts for UPSC Exams

- Headquarters: Tromsø, Norway.
- **Founded:** 1996 (Ottawa Declaration).
- Member States: 8 (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden,
- **Permanent Participants:** 6 Indigenous groups (e.g., Inuit Circumpolar Council, Aleut International Association).
- Observers: Includes India, China, Japan, Germany, UK, and other non-Arctic nations.
- Key Climate Agreements: Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF).
- India's Arctic Presence: Himadri Research Station, National Arctic Policy (2022), Arctic Monsoon Studies.

How to Approach Arctic Council in UPSC Exam

For Prelims

- Memorize the Arctic Council's headquarters, members, and India's observer status.
- Know India's Arctic research programs (Himadri station, satellite monitoring, climate studies).
- Understand the impact of Arctic ice melt on global sea levels and monsoons.

For Mains (GS Paper II - International Relations & GS Paper III – Environment)

- Arctic Council's role in global climate governance.
- Impact of Arctic climate change on India's weather and economy.
- Comparison of Arctic Council with Antarctic Treaty System.
- India's Arctic strategy and scientific engagement.

Association (IORA)

Name of the Organization

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ORA is an intergovernmental organization aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean region. It serves as a platform for member states to collaborate on various economic, environmental, and security issues pertinent to the Indian Ocean Rim.

Year of Formation

Established in 1997.

Why they formed it?

- Historical Context: The end of the Cold War and the rise of globalization highlighted the strategic and economic significance of the Indian Ocean region.
- Reasons for Formation:
 - » To promote sustained economic growth and balanced development among member states.
 - » To facilitate trade and investment opportunities.
 - » To address shared challenges such as maritime security, environmental conservation, and disaster management.

Type

Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Ebene, Mauritius.

Members

Number of Members: 23 member states.



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• Full List:

Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

• Criteria for Membership:

- » Sovereign states bordering the Indian Ocean.
- » Adherence to the principles and objectives outlined in the IORA Charter.

Who are its members?

• **Basis of Selection:** Membership is open to countries with a coastline on the Indian Ocean, ensuring that all member states have a direct stake in the region's maritime affairs.

• Notable Inclusions:

» France: Included due to its overseas territories in the Indian Ocean, such as Réunion and Mayotte.

Observers and Dialogue Partners:

» IORA also engages with dialogue partners, including countries and organizations that have strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India is a founding member of IORA (1997) and one of its 23 member states, given its Indian Ocean littoral status.

What it does (Key Objectives)

• Key Objectives:

- » Promote sustainable growth and balanced development in the Indian Ocean region.
- » Enhance regional trade and investment. Strengthen maritime security and safety.
- » Encourage cooperation in disaster risk management.

» Foster academic, science, and technology collaboration.

Areas of Work:

- » Maritime Safety and Security: Collaborative efforts to combat piracy, illegal fishing, and ensure safe navigation.
- » Trade and Investment Facilitation: Initiatives to reduce trade barriers and promote economic integration.
- » Fisheries Management: Sustainable practices to preserve marine resources.
- » Disaster Risk Management: Coordinated responses to natural disasters and capacity building.
- » Academic and Scientific Cooperation: Research collaborations on oceanography, climate change, and environmental protection.
- » **Tourism Promotion:** Developing the region as a prime tourist destination.

Recent Activities

- 26th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (May 2024):
 - » Held virtually, focusing on strengthening regional architecture and reinforcing Indian Ocean cooperation.
- India-IORA Cruise Tourism Conference (June 2024):
 - » Hosted in New Delhi, India, with participation from 10 member states.
 - » Aimed at promoting cruise tourism and enhancing regional connectivity.
- Participation in the Fourth Bay of Bengal Maritime Dialogue (May 2024):
 - » IORA engaged in discussions on maritime security and cooperation in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- IORA Business Forum (2023, Abu Dhabi, UAE):
 - » Focused on increasing intra-regional





- trade and investment among Indian Ocean economies.
- » Key discussions on blue economy, energy cooperation, and technologydriven trade solutions.

First-Ever IORA Ocean Ministers Meeting (2023, Bangladesh):

- the » Adopted Dhaka Declaration strengthen ocean governance and sustainable marine resource management.
- » Launched initiatives on blue economy and fisheries conservation.

IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (2022, Sri Lanka):

- » Strengthened maritime security cooperation among members.
- » Developed frameworks to counter piracy, illegal fishing, and maritime terrorism.

IORA's Women's Economic **Empowerment Initiative (2022-2023):**

» Focused on increasing the participation of women in trade, business, and technology sectors within IORA member states.

Recent News & Initiatives

IORA and Climate Change (2024):

- » Launched a new Climate Resilience Fund to help vulnerable member states (especially small island nations) tackle climate challenges.
- » Enhancing disaster preparedness and response mechanisms for Indian Ocean coastal communities.

• IORA-ASEAN Cooperation (2023-2024):

- » Strengthening ties with ASEAN to develop shared maritime security policies and economic cooperation frameworks.
- IORA's Indo-Pacific Engagement (2024):

» Deepening cooperation with the Quad (India, USA, Japan, Australia) and European Union on Indian Ocean security, connectivity, and economic development.

IORA Blue **Economy** Ministerial Conference (2023):

» Discussed sustainable fisheries, renewable energy (offshore wind, tidal energy), and marine conservation policies.

IORA's **Counter-Piracy Operations** (2023-2024):

» Increased naval cooperation among India, Seychelles, and East African members to tackle piracy near Somalia.

India-Specific Developments

India's Strategic Engagement with IORA

- India is one of IORA's founding members and a key leader in the organization.
- India hosts several IORA ministerial meetings on trade, climate change, and security.

India-IORA Blue Economy Cooperation (2023-2024):

- India has invested in deep-sea fishing, marine biotechnology, and ocean-based renewable energy projects within IORA states.
- Indian companies are collaborating with Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka on offshore wind energy and sustainable fisheries projects.

IORA Cruise Tourism Initiative (2024):

- India hosted a Cruise Tourism Summit for IORA in 2024 to boost maritime tourism and coastal connectivity.
- Strengthening Indian Ocean tourism circuits, linking ports in India, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, and Mauritius.

IORA and India's Act East Policy:

• IORA has become a key pillar of India's





Act East Policy, strengthening links with Southeast Asia and Africa.

 India is promoting IORA-BIMSTEC-ASEAN cooperation on maritime connectivity and security.

IORA and India's Security Interests (2024):

- IORA supports India's Indo-Pacific vision, ensuring freedom of navigation, countering piracy, and deterring Chinese expansion in the Indian Ocean.
- IORA members have backed India's position on maritime security, opposing militarization in the Indian Ocean.

Comparison with other Orgs

Unique Aspects of IORA

• Focus on the Entire Indian Ocean Region:

» Unlike ASEAN or BIMSTEC, IORA covers the entire Indian Ocean, from Africa to Australia, and South Asia to Southeast Asia

Combination of Economic and Security Cooperation:

- » IORA is unique in balancing economic, maritime security, and environmental issues.
- » Unlike SAARC or BIMSTEC, IORA integrates blue economy policies with maritime security and trade facilitation.

• Diverse Membership:

» IORA includes major global powers (India, Australia, UAE, France) and small island states (Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles).

Comparison with Similar Organizations

		ı		1
Organi-	Focus	Member	Security	Eco-
zation		Coun-	Role	nomic
		tries		Integra-
				tion
IORA	Mar-	Indian	Yes	Grow-
	itime	Ocean	(count-	ing, but
	security,	nations	er-pira-	no com-
	trade,	(23	cy, mar-	mon
	blue	mem-	itime	market
	econo-	bers)	safety)	yet
	my		·	
ASEAN	Eco-	South-	Limited	Strong
	nom-	east		eco-
	ic &	Asian		nomic
	political	nations		bloc
	integra-	(10)		
	tion			
BIMS-	Trade &	South &	Limited	Focused
TEC	security	South-		on
		east		connec-
		Asia (7)		tivity
SADC	Eco-	16	Limited	More
(South-	nomic	African		trade
ern	& social	nations		Focused
African	devel-			
Devel-	opment			
opment				
Com-				
munity)				

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on IORA and Related Topics

- IORA's role in regional trade and security has been covered in previous UPSC questions.
- UPSC has asked about India's involvement in IORA and how it complements India's Indo-Pacific strategy.
- IORA's role in countering China's influence in the Indian Ocean has been an emerging area in UPSC IR questions.

Key Facts for UPSC Exams

• **Headquarters:** Ebene, Mauritius.

• **Founded:** 1997.

- Number of Members: 23.
- **Key Agreements:**
 - » IORA's Maritime Security Framework.
 - » Blue Economy Declaration (2015).
 - » Climate Resilience Fund (2024).
- India's Role:
 - » Leading country in IORA's Maritime Security and Blue Economy Initiatives.
 - » Strengthening ties with Africa, Southeast Asia, and island nations via IORA.

2.2 Regional Economic Blocs and Trade Agreements

Regional economic blocs and trade agreements are formed to boost trade and economic cooperation among neighboring countries. These agreements reduce tariffs, ease trade restrictions, and encourage investment among member states. Some of them, like **States-Mexico-Canada** (United **Agreement)** and Mercosur, focus on removing trade barriers within specific regions, while others, like RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), include multiple continents and major economies. Economic blocs can provide advantages such as increased exports, job creation, and stronger supply chains, making them critical for global commerce. However, they can also create trade dependencies and political challenges among members. These agreements shape international trade policies and influence the global economic order.

2.2.1 **USMCA**

Name of the Organization

United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The USMCA is a free trade agreement among the United States, Mexico, and Canada, designed to facilitate trade and investment by reducing barriers and establishing robust trade rules. It replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and aims to modernize trade relations among the three countries.

Year of Formation

The USMCA was signed on November 30, 2018, and entered into force on July 1, 2020.

Why they formed it?

• Historical Context: NAFTA, implemented in 1994, was the original trade agreement among the three nations. Over time, the need arose to update its provisions to address modern trade challenges, including digital trade. intellectual property rights, and labor standards.

Reasons for Formation:

- » Modernize and address gaps in the original NAFTA framework.
- » Enhance labor and environmental standards.
- » Strengthen intellectual property protections.
- » Facilitate digital trade and e-commerce.
- » Rebalance trade to support North American workers and industries.

Type

• Intergovernmental Agreement.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

The USMCA does not have a centralized headquarters. Administration and oversight are managed collaboratively by the trade authorities of the three member countries:



- » United States Trade Representative (USTR)
- » Mexico's Secretariat of Economy
- » Global Affairs Canada

Members

- **Number of Members:** Three.
- Full List:

United States, Mexico, Canada

- Criteria for Membership:
 - » Sovereign nations within North America.
 - » Mutual agreement to adhere to the terms and provisions outlined in the USMCA.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is exclusive to the three North American countries that were parties to NAFTA, aiming to strengthen regional economic integration.
- Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:
 - » The agreement does not include other countries from the Americas, focusing solely on the original NAFTA members.

India's Membership

No – India is not party to this North American trade pact (formerly NAFTA).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Key Objectives:
 - » Promote fair and balanced trade among the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.
 - » Enhance competitiveness of the regional economy.
 - » Support high-paying jobs and economic growth.
 - » Protect and enforce intellectual property rights.

- » Facilitate digital trade and cross-border data flows.
- » Strengthen and labor rights environmental protections.

Areas of Work:

- » Trade in Goods and Services: Reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers.
- » **Digital Trade:** Establishing frameworks for e-commerce and data exchange.
- » Intellectual **Property:** Enhancing protections for patents, trademarks, and copyrights.
- » Labor and Environment: Implementing standards to protect workers and the environment.
- » Dispute **Settlement:** Providing mechanisms to resolve trade disputes.

Recent Activities (Last 4 Years Continued)

USMCA Dispute Resolution Cases (2021-2024)

- US vs. Canada (Dairy Market Access Dispute)
 - » **2021:** The U.S. filed a complaint under USMCA dispute resolution regarding Canada's tariff rate quotas (TRQs) for dairy imports.
 - » **2022:** The US won the dispute, leading Canada to adjust its dairy import policies.
 - » **2023:**The U.S. launched a second dispute case, alleging that Canada's revised TRQs still violated the agreement.
- US vs. Mexico (Automobile Content Rules Dispute)
 - » 2022: Mexico and Canada challenged the U.S. interpretation of "rules of origin" for automobiles.
 - » **2023:** A USMCA panel ruled against the U.S., stating its stricter requirement for auto content was inconsistent with the agreement.



- » 2024: The U.S. complied, allowing more flexibility in vehicle parts' origin calculations.
- USMCA and Biotech Corn Dispute (2024)
 - » The U.S. won a dispute against Mexico's ban on genetically engineered corn, arguing it was unscientific and violated USMCA rules.

Recent News & Initiatives

1. USMCA Joint Review (Scheduled for 2026

- USMCA members are preparing for a major review in 2026.
- This review could lead to:
 - » Modifications in labor and digital trade provisions.
 - » Potential renegotiation or renewal (USMCA has a sunset clause for 2036).

2. Strengthening Supply Chains in North America

- USMCA nations have increased cooperation to reduce dependence on China for critical supply chains, especially:
 - » Semiconductors (chip manufacturing)
 - » Electric vehicles (EV)
 - » Pharmaceuticals and rare earth minerals

3. Green Energy and Environmental **Commitments**

- USMCA includes new environmental protection measures:
 - » Reducing carbon emissions in trade and manufacturing
 - » Stricter labor standards in oil & gas industries
 - » Cross-border cooperation on renewable energy projects

India-Specific Developments

- 1. Impact of USMCA on India's Trade
- India is not a part of USMCA, but the

- agreement has indirect implications on India's exports.
- India's exports to the U.S. and Canada face competition from Mexico due to lower tariffs under USMCA.
- Sectors impacted: Automobiles, textiles, and IT services.

2. USMCA and India's Pharma Industry

- Mexico and Canada's demand for pharmaceutcals is rising, and Indian companies are increasing exports.
- India is negotiating trade partnerships with Mexico and Canada to counterbalance USMCA advantages.

3. India's Role in USMCA Supply Chains

USMCA With countries reducing dependence on China, India is emerging as a potential alternative supplier in semiconductors, auto parts, and electronics.

Comparison with other Orgs (Unique Aspects vs. Similar Organizations)

USMCA vs. NAFTA (Its Predecessor)

- **Modernization of Trade Rules: USMCA** updates NAFTA by incorporating digital trade, intellectual property rights, and environmental standards that were missing in the original agreement.
- Stronger Labor Provisions: USMCA introduces stricter labor protections than NAFTA, particularly in Mexico, requiring higher wages and better conditions in key industries like automotive manufacturing.
- Sunset Clause & Periodic Reviews: Unlike NAFTA, which had no expiry date, USMCA includes a 16-year sunset clause with a mandatory review every six years. This ensures continuous assessment and potential modifications.

USMCAvs. RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership)

• **Regional Scope:** USMCA is a North American trade pact, whereas RCEP covers



15 Asia-Pacific economies including China, Japan, ASEAN countries, and Australia.

- Trade Liberalization Approach: RCEP focuses on reducing tariffs and trade barriers without significant labor or environmental standards, while USMCA has stronger regulatory frameworks in these areas.
- Geopolitical **Implications:** USMCA strengthens North American economic integration, whereas RCEP is viewed as China-centric, with India opting out of RCEP due to trade imbalance concerns.

USMCA vs. CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)

- **U.S. Absence in CPTPP:** The U.S. withdrew from the original TPP under President Trump, but it later renegotiated NAFTA into USMCA. CPTPP, however, still includes Canada and Mexico.
- Higher Trade Standards in CPTPP: The CPTPP has even stronger trade liberalization measures than USMCA, particularly in services trade, investment rules, and environmental regulations.
- Stronger Protectionist Elements in **USMCA:** USMCA includes more restrictive "rules of origin" requirements for the auto industry, favoring domestic manufacturing in North America.

USMCA vs. EU Customs Union

- Market Access & Tariffs: The European Union Customs Union ensures tarifffree trade and common external tariffs, whereas USMCA still allows some countryspecific tariffs and dispute mechanisms.
- Regulatory Harmonization: The EU follows a more centralized approach, with uniform regulations and single-market integration, whereas USMCA allows each member country more national autonomy.
- Mobility of Labor: Unlike the EU's free movement of workers, USMCA does not establish open labor mobility between the

U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

WTO USMCA vs. (World Trade Organization)

- **Scope of Agreements:** USMCA is a regional trade bloc, whereas the WTO provides a global framework for trade rules.
- **Dispute Settlement:** WTO has a formal dispute settlement body, while USMCA relies on specific dispute panels between the three North American countries.
- **Regulatory Standards:** USMCA higher environmental, digital trade, and labor protections, which the WTO does not strictly enforce on its member states.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Ouestions on USMCA and **Related Topics**

- UPSC has asked about major regional trade agreements like NAFTA, USMCA, RCEP, and CPTPP.
- Trade protectionism, regionalism in trade agreements, and India's response to major FTAs have been themes in Mains and Prelims.
- India's trade relations with North America and the challenges posed by regional FTAs like USMCA have been analyzed in various economic and international relations questions.

Key Facts for UPSC Exam

- USMCA replaced NAFTA in 2020 to modernize North American trade.
- The agreement includes the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, with a 16-year sunset clause and reviews every six years.
- USMCA enhances labor and environmental standards, digital trade rules, and dispute settlement mechanisms.
- India is not a member but faces trade competition in sectors like textiles, pharma, and IT services due to tariff advantages given to Mexico under USMCA.



USMCA's impact on global trade and supplychains is significant, particularly in semiconductors, electric vehicles (EVs), and renewable energy industries.

2.2.2 Mercosur

Name of the Organization

• Mercado Común del Sur (Mercosur)

What it is (Nature and Function)

Mercosur is a regional economic and political bloc in South America, aiming to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people, and currency among its member countries.

Year of Formation

1991

Why they formed it?

 Historical Context: In the late 20th century, South American countries sought to enhance economic integration to boost development and reduce external dependencies.

• Reasons for Formation:

- » Strengthen economic ties among neighboring countries.
- » Create a common market to enhance competitiveness.
- » Promote regional development through coordinated economic policies.

Type

• Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Montevideo, Uruguay

Members

Number of Members: 5 full members

• Full List:

Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia (joined in July 2024)

• Criteria for Membership:

- » Geographical location in South America.
- » Commitment to democratic governance.
- » Adherence to the bloc's economic and political agreements.

Who are its members?

• **Basis of Selection:** Membership is primarily open to South American nations that align with Mercosur's democratic and economic principles.

Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:

- » Venezuela was admitted as a full member in 2012 but has been suspended since December 2016 due to political and economic issues.
- » Associate Members: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Suriname have associate status, allowing for limited participation without full membership benefits.

India's Membership

• **No** – India is not a member of the Mercosur customs union (South American bloc). (India has a limited trade agreement with Mercosur, but is not a member state.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

Key Objectives:

- » Facilitate free trade and movement of goods, services, and people among member states.
- » Establish a common external tariff and trade policy.
- » Coordinate macroeconomic and sectoral policies among members.
- » Promote economic development and



integration into the global economy.

• Areas of Work:

- » Trade Liberalization: Reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers.
- » Customs Union: Implementing a common external tariff.
- » Policy Coordination: Aligning economic, industrial, and fiscal policies.
- » Social and Cultural Integration: Encouraging cooperation in education, culture, and labor.

Recent Activities

- Inclusion of Bolivia as a Full Member:
 After years of negotiations, Bolivia's membership was ratified, and it officially joined Mercosur in July 2024.
- EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement: In December 2024, after 25 years of negotiations, Mercosur and the European Union finalized a free trade agreement aiming to create one of the world's largest free trade areas.
- Response to Global Trade Dynamics:
 Amid rising global trade tensions,
 Mercosur has emphasized the importance of strengthening internal ties and diversifying trade partnerships to reduce dependency on traditional markets.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Strengthening Ties with the European Union: The EU-Mercosur agreement is poised to enhance economic cooperation, reduce tariffs, and open markets, benefiting various sectors across both regions.
- Environmental and Agricultural Discussions: The trade deal has sparked debates concerning environmental standards and agricultural practices, with discussions focusing on sustainable development and fair competition.

India-Specific Developments

1. Expansion of India-Mercosur

Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)

• **Current PTA:** India and Mercosur signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in 2004, which grants tariff concessions on 450 products.

• Expansion Plans:

- » India and Mercosur are negotiating an expansion of the PTA, aiming to increase the number of products covered to over 2,000 items.
- » India is pushing for greater access to Mercosur markets for pharmaceuticals, textiles, automobiles, and engineering goods.
- » Mercosur members seek better access to the Indian market for agricultural products, including soy, wheat, beef, and sugar.

2. Bilateral Trade Growth

- India's trade with Mercosur exceeded \$15 billion in 2023, with exports of refined petroleum, pharmaceuticals, and engineering goods and imports of agricultural products and minerals.
- Brazil and Argentina are key trade partners, with increasing investment in renewable energy, agribusiness, and information technology.

3. Energy and Renewable Cooperation

- India and Brazil signed agreements on ethanol production and biofuels, aligning with India's Ethanol Blending Program.
- India is investing in lithium mining projects in Argentina, essential for electric vehicle (EV) battery production.
- Solar energy partnerships are being developed under India's International Solar Alliance (ISA) with Mercosur nations.

4. Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare Sector Collaboration

 Indian pharmaceutical companies have expanded operations in Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay to boost affordable generic





drug supply in the region.

• Discussions are underway for joint vaccine production and health technology exchange between India and Mercosur.

5. Connectivity and Trade Logistics **Improvements**

 India is working on enhancing shipping connectivity with Latin America, including direct maritime routes to Mercosur ports to reduce trade costs and transit times.

Comparison with other Orgs

Mercosur vs. Other Regional Trade Blocs

1. Mercosur vs. European Union (EU)

Similarities:

- » Both operate as customs unions with common external tariffs and free trade among members.
- » Both focus on political and economic integration.

Differences:

- » Mercosur lacks the strong political and institutional integration of the EU, such as a common parliament or single currency.
- » EU has deeper legal and regulatory integration, while Mercosur countries retain greater national sovereignty.

2. Mercosur vs. USMCA (United States-**Mexico-Canada Agreement)**

- USMCA is more trade-focused, with stronger intellectual property and labor provisions.
- Mercosur includes social and political cooperation, beyond trade.
- USMCA allows its members to sign independent trade deals. whereas Mercosur members negotiate trade agreements as a bloc.

3. Mercosur vs. ASEAN (Association of **Southeast Asian Nations**)

ASEAN has a looser economic structure.

- while Mercosur is a customs union with stricter trade policies.
- ASEAN allows free trade with external countries more flexibly, whereas Mercosur has a common external tariff.
- ASEAN has a more diverse economy with high global trade integration, while Mercosur remains focused on intraregional trade.

4. Mercosur vs. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)

- Mercosur is a regional trade bloc, while BRICS is a geopolitical and economic alliance of emerging economies.
- Mercosur's focus is South American trade integration, whereas BRICS members have broader global cooperation in finance, energy, and technology.
- India is a BRICS member but not part of Mercosur, though it maintains trade agreements with both.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on Mercosur and **Related Topics**

- UPSC has asked about regional trade blocs like Mercosur, NAFTA (now USMCA), RCEP, and EU, particularly regarding their impact on India's foreign trade policies.
- Previous questions have focused on India-Mercosur trade agreements and challenges faced in expanding economic ties.
- Mercosur's role in global trade and its comparison with other economic alliances has also been part of Mains questions.

Key Facts for UPSC Exam

- Mercosur was founded in 1991 with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay as full members.
- Bolivia became a full member in 2024.
- Venezuela was suspended from Mercosur in 2016 due to political and economic instability.



- Mercosur is a customs union with a common external tariff but struggles with internal trade barriers.
- India has a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Mercosur since 2004, and negotiations are ongoing to expand it.
- Indian exports to Mercosur: Pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles, and machinery.
- Key Indian imports from Mercosur: Soybean oil, sugar, minerals, and crude oil.
- The EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement (expected to take effect in 2025) could impact India's trade relations with Mercosur.

2.2.3 RCEP

Name of the Organization

Regional Comprehensive **Economic** Partnership (RCEP)

What it is (Nature and Function)

RCEP is a regional free trade agreement among 15 Asia-Pacific nations, aiming to establish a comprehensive economic partnership that facilitates trade and investment, enhances economic integration, and promotes sustainable development across member countries.

Year of Formation

• 2020

Why they formed it?

- Historical Context: Initiated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2012, RCEP was conceived to strengthen economic ties among member countries and address the complexities arising from overlapping bilateral and regional trade agreements.
- **Reasons for Formation:**
 - » Streamline and harmonize trade rules

- and tariffs in the Asia-Pacific region.
- » Enhance market access for goods, services, and investments.
- » Promote regional supply chains and economic integration.
- » Provide a counterbalance to other regional trade agreements, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

RCEP does not have a permanent headquarters. The ASEAN Secretariat, located in Jakarta, Indonesia, serves as the depository for the agreement.

Members

- **Number of Members: 15**
- Full List: Australia. Brunei Darussalam, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam
- Criteria for Membership:
 - » Being an ASEAN member or having existing free trade agreements with ASEAN.
 - » Commitment to the principles and objectives outlined in the RCEP agreement.

Who are its members?

Basis of Selection: Membership is based on existing economic ties with ASEAN, either as member states or through established free trade agreements.



Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:

- » Inclusion: RCEP is the first multilateral free trade agreement involving China, Japan, and South Korea simultaneously.
- » **Exclusion:** India was initially part of the negotiations but opted out in 2019 due to concerns over trade imbalances and the potential impact on domestic industries.

India's Membership

No – India ultimately opted not to join RCEP in 2019. (India was an initial negotiator but withdrew before conclusion, so it's not among the 15 RCEP parties.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

Key Objectives:

- » Reduce or eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers on goods and services.
- » Enhance investment opportunities and promote transparency in investment regulations.
- » Simplify customs procedures facilitate efficient cross-border trade.
- » Protect intellectual property rights and promote technological cooperation.
- » Establish mechanisms for dispute resolution among member countries.

Areas of Work:

- » Trade in Goods: Phased reduction of tariffs to boost intra-regional trade.
- » Trade in Services: Liberalization of service sectors to enhance market access.
- » **Investment:** Creating a conducive environment for investors through predictable policies.
- » Intellectual Property: Strengthening legal frameworks to protect innovations and creative works.
- » **E-commerce:** Facilitating digital trade by

promoting online consumer protection and data privacy.

Recent Activities

• Implementation and Meetings:

- » January 1, 2022: RCEP officially entered into force, creating the world's largest free trade area.
- » **2022-2024:** Regular meetings, including Joint Committee and Ministers' Meetings, were held to oversee the implementation and address operational issues.

• Economic Impact:

» 2023: China's trade with other RCEP members reached approximately RMB 12.6 trillion, marking a 5.3% increase from 2021.

Developments: Membership

- » **2023:** The Philippines ratified the agreement, bringing all 15 signatories into the partnership.
- » **2024:** Discussions emerged regarding potential expansion, with countries like the United Kingdom expressing interest in joining RCEP.

Recent News & Initiatives

Trade Facilitation:

» Efforts are ongoing to harmonize customs procedures and rules of origin to streamline trade among member countries.

Digital Economy:

» Initiatives are being developed to support e-commerce and digital services, recognizing the growing importance of the digital economy in the region.

Investment Promotion:

» RCEP aims to attract more foreign direct investment into regional manufacturing, enhancing regional value chains and

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competitiveness.

India-Specific Developments

Reconsideration of Membership:

» InNovember 2024, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, suggested that India should consider joining RCEP to boost its manufacturing and export sectors.

• Strategic Trade Discussions:

» Despite not being a member, India continues to engage in dialogues with RCEP countries to address trade imbalances and explore potential collaborations.

Comparison with other Orgs

RCEP vs. USMCA (United States-Mexico-**Canada Agreement)**

Regional Focus: RCEP is centered around Asia-Pacific, while USMCA is a North American trade agreement.

• Trade Liberalization:

- » RCEP aims for gradual tariff elimination but allows more flexibility for developing economies in tariff commitments.
- » USMCA has stricter labor and environmental standards, particularly targeting trade relations with Mexico's manufacturing sector.

Digital Trade:

» RCEP includes some digital trade provisions but is less comprehensive than USMCA in data protection and e-commerce.

RCEP vs. CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)

Membership Differences:

» RCEP includes China, while CPTPP excludes China but includes Canada, Mexico, and South American economies.

Trade Liberalization Standards:

- » CPTPP has higher standards for intellectual property, environmental regulations, and labor rights.
- » RCEP focuses more on lowering tariffs and enhancing regional supply chains rather than stringent regulations.

RCEP vs. ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

Scope of Agreement:

» AFTA applies only to ASEAN countries, while RCEP includes non-ASEAN trade giants like China, Japan, Australia, and South Korea.

Rules of Origin:

» RCEP's unified rules of origin allow regional manufacturers to source inputs from multiple member countries while qualifying for preferential tariffs.

RCEP vs. WTO (World Trade Organization)

Trade Scope:

» The WTO provides global trade rules, while RCEP focuses only on Asia-Pacific trade integration.

• Flexibility in Commitments:

» RCEP allows gradual tariff reductions and exemptions for developing economies, unlike the WTO's binding commitments on tariff ceilings.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions on RCEP and Related **Trade Agreements**

• UPSC Prelims and Mains have covered major regional trade agreements, particularly in the context of India's economic policy.

Questions have focused on:

- » The economic implications of RCEP and why India opted out.
- » Comparisons between RCEP, CPTPP, and WTO-based trade frameworks.
- » India's trade policy adjustments after refusing to join RCEP.



Key Facts for UPSC Exams

- RCEP is the world's largest free trade agreement, covering 30% of global GDP and population.
- India withdrew from RCEP in 2019, citing concerns over cheap Chinese imports, trade deficits, and agricultural sector risks.
- The deal was signed in 2020 and became effective in January 2022.
- Members: 10 ASEAN countries + China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand.
- RCEP aims to gradually eliminate tariffs on 90% of goods over 20 years.
- India has an option to join RCEP later if it chooses.

2.2.4 European Free Trade **Association**

Name of the Organization

• European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

What it is (Nature and Function)

EFTA is an intergovernmental organization established to promote free trade and economic integration among its member states. It facilitates the liberalization of trade in goods and services, aiming to enhance economic cooperation and growth.

Year of Formation

1960

Why they formed it?

- Historical Context: EFTA was founded on May 3, 1960, as an alternative trade bloc for European countries that chose not to join the then European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU).
- **Reasons for Formation:**
 - » To eliminate customs duties on industrial

products among member countries.

- » To provide a framework for economic cooperation without the political integration associated with the EEC.
- » To maintain the sovereignty of member states in conducting their external trade policies.

Type

Intergovernmental Organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

- Number of Members: 4
- Full List:

Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland

- Criteria for Membership:
 - » European countries committed to promoting free trade and economic cooperation.
 - » Willingness to uphold the principles and obligations outlined in the EFTA Convention.

Who are its members?

- Basis of Selection: Membership is open to European states that seek economic integration without political union, allowing them to maintain independent trade policies.
- **Notable Inclusions or Exclusions:**
 - » Exclusions: Several founding members, such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Portugal, left EFTA to join the European Union.
 - » **Inclusions:** Liechtenstein joined EFTA in 1991, enhancing its economic ties



within Europe.

India's Membership

 No – India is not a member of EFTA (which comprises Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein). (India is negotiating a trade deal with EFTA, but not a member.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

• Key Objectives:

- » Promote free trade and economic integration among member states.
- » Establish and manage a network of free trade agreements with non-EU countries.
- » Collaborate with the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, enabling members (except Switzerland) to participate in the EU's Internal Market.

Areas of Work:

- » Trade Relations: Negotiating and implementing free trade agreements globally.
- » Statistical Cooperation: Providing reliable statistics to support trade and economic policies.
- » Legal Affairs: Ensuring the implementation of EFTA conventions and agreements.

Recent Activities

• Expansion of Free Trade Agreements:

- » Kosovo and Thailand: On January 22, 2025, EFTA signed free trade agreements with Kosovo and Thailand, aiming to enhance trade relations and economic cooperation with these nations.
- India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA):
 - » Signing of TEPA: After 21 rounds of negotiations since 2008, EFTA and India signed the TEPA on March 10, 2024. This

landmark agreement aims to enhance trade and investment flows between the parties.

» Parliamentary Approvals: In September 2024, the Swiss government submitted the TEPA with India to its parliament for approval. The agreement is expected to come into effect in late 2025 or early 2026, significantly reducing tariffs and enhancing market access.

• Establishment of Business Support Initiatives:

» India-EFTA Desk: Launched in February 2025, the India-EFTA Desk serves as a single-window mechanism to support EFTA businesses in navigating the Indian market, facilitating investments, and fostering economic cooperation.

• EFTA Consultative Committee Work Programme 2025:

» Monitoring Legislative Proposals: In February 2025, the EFTA Consultative Committee outlined its work programme, prioritizing the monitoring of new legislative proposals to identify interests of the EEA EFTA States at an early stage.

• EFTA Council Meetings:

» First Meeting of 2025: The EFTA Council convened for the first time in 2025 to discuss recent developments, including the signing of free trade agreements with Kosovo and Thailand.

Recent News & Initiatives

• Economic Impact Assessments:

» Projected Investments: The TEPA is expected to bring \$100 billion in investments to India over the next 15 years, creating approximately 1 million jobs. This significant economic boost underscores the importance of the agreement for both EFTA and India.

Sectoral Benefits:



» Market Access Enhancements: The agreement includes concessions on various products, such as reduced duties on Swiss watches, chocolates, and cut and polished diamonds, benefiting both EFTA exporters and Indian consumers.

Business Support Initiatives:

» New Business Support Desk: EFTA established a dedicated resource to assist companies from EFTA states in navigating the Indian market, building connections, and preparing for the implementation of the TEPA.

India-Specific Developments

• Implementation Timeline of TEPA:

» **Expected Enactment:** The TEPA is anticipated to come into force before the end of 2025, following the completion of necessary parliamentary approvals and procedural formalities.

Investment Commitments:

» Significant Pledges: EFTA countries have committed to investing \$100 billion in India over the next 15 years, a move expected to generate substantial employment opportunities and stimulate economic growth.

Establishment of India-EFTA Desk:

» Facilitating Business Relations: In February 2025, the India-EFTA Desk was inaugurated to provide structured support to EFTA businesses looking to invest or establish operations in India, promoting ease of doing business and strengthening economic ties.

Comparison with other Orgs

EFTA vs. European Union (EU):

» Scope of Integration: While both EFTA and the EU aim to promote economic cooperation among European countries, EFTA focuses solely on free trade and economic integration without political union, allowing members to maintain

independent foreign policies. contrast, the EU involves deeper political and economic integration, including a common currency for some members and shared legislative frameworks.

• EFTA vs. European Economic Area (EEA):

» Membership and Market Access: The EEA includes EU member states and three EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway), facilitating their participation in the EU's Internal Market. Switzerland, an EFTA member, is not part of the EEA but maintains bilateral agreements with the EU to access specific sectors of the Internal Market.

EFTA vs. World Trade Organization (WTO):

» Nature of Agreements: EFTA operates through regional free trade agreements among its members and with other countries, focusing on comprehensive economic cooperation. The WTO, on the other hand, is a global organization that regulates international trade between nations, providing a framework for negotiating trade agreements and resolving disputes.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Ouestions:

» UPSC examinations have featured questions on international organizations, including EFTA, focusing on their roles, member countries, and India's trade relations.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation and Purpose: EFTA was established in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration among its member states.
- » Current **Members:** Iceland. Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- » India-EFTA Relations: The signing of the TEPA in March 2024 marks a

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significant milestone in India's trade relations, with expected investments of \$100 billion over 15 years and the creation of approximately 1 million jobs.

» Comparison with EU: Understanding the distinctions between EFTA and the EU is crucial, particularly regarding the scope of economic and political integration.

2.3 Regional Security **Alliances and Defense Cooperation Bodies**

Regional security alliances and defense cooperation bodies are military and securityfocused organizations where member countries agree to work together in case of external threats. These alliances help maintain regional peace, prevent conflicts, and coordinate joint military actions. The most powerful among them is **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), which provides collective defense to its members, mainly in North America and Europe. In Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) plays a key role in counterterrorism and regional security, especially in Central and South Asia. Some alliances also focus on cyber security, intelligence-sharing, and defense modernization. These organizations ensure stability by deterring military aggression and enhancing defense coordination between allied nations.

2.3.1 NATO

Already Covered in 1.2.9

2.3.2 Shanghai Cooperation **Organisation (SCO)**

Already Covered in 1.2.10

2.3.3 CSTO

Name of the Organization

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The CSTO is an intergovernmental military alliance comprising select post-Soviet states. Its primary function is to ensure collective defense and security among member nations, fostering military and political cooperation to address regional threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal migration.

Year of Formation

The Collective Security Treaty (CST) was signed on May 15, 1992. The CSTO was formally established on October 7, 2002.

Why they formed it?

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, newly independent states sought mechanisms to maintain regional stability and security. The CST was initiated to promote collective defense and cooperation among these nations, addressing common security concerns in the post-Soviet landscape.

Type

• Intergovernmental Military Alliance

Status

Active

Headquarters

Moscow, Russia

Members

 As of February 2025, the CSTO comprises six member states: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, **Tajikistan**

Who are its Members?

Membership is primarily composed of post-Soviet states that have committed to mutual defense and security cooperation. Notably, Armenia suspended its participation in the CSTO in February 2024 and announced its intention to withdraw in June 2024, citing dissatisfaction with the organization's response to regional conflicts.

India's Membership

No - India is not a member of this Russialed defense alliance.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Collective Defense:** An attack against one member is considered an attack against all, obligating collective response.
- Military Cooperation: Conducts joint exercises and trainings to enhance interoperability among member states' armed forces.
- **Counterterrorism:** Collaborates combat terrorism and extremism within the region.
- Drug Trafficking Prevention: Implements measures to curb illegal drug trade across member states' borders.
- Crisis Response: Deploys peacekeeping forces in response to internal or regional crises upon request.

Recent Activities

- Kazakhstan Unrest (January 2022): In response to mass protests, CSTO deployed peacekeeping forces to Kazakhstan to stabilize the situation, marking its first significant collective action.
- Conflict Armenia-Azerbaijan (September 2022): Armenia requested CSTO assistance during border clashes with Azerbaijan. The organization sent observers but did not engage militarily, leading to criticism and Armenia's subsequent suspension of participation.
- Military Exercises: Conducted joint drills in member states, focusing on enhancing readiness and coordination among forces.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Armenia's Suspension and Withdrawal: In early 2024, Armenia suspended its CSTO membership and announced plans to withdraw, expressing dissatisfaction with the organization's support during conflicts with Azerbaijan.
- **Engagement with Observers:** India has participated as an observer in CSTO military exercises, indicating potential for broader cooperation.

India-Specific Developments

Participation: Observer India has engaged with the CSTO by observing military maneuvers, reflecting its interest in regional security dynamics and potential collaboration.

Comparison Factors

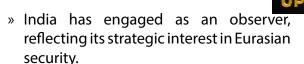
- Regional Focus: Unlike NATO's broader transatlantic scope, the CSTO concentrates on Eurasian security, particularly among former Soviet states.
- **Russian Dominance:** Russia plays a central role in the CSTO, influencing its strategic direction and operations.
- Collective Defense Clause: Similar to NATO's Article 5, the CSTO has provisions for mutual defense, though its practical application has been limited.

Relevance to UPSC

UPSC Relevance: Understanding the CSTO is pertinent for topics on international relations, regional security alliances, and India's foreign policy.

Key Facts:

- » Established in 2002, succeeding the 1992 Collective Security Treaty.
- » Headquartered in Moscow, Russia.
- » Comprises six member states as of 2025.
- » Armenia suspended participation in 2024, indicating internal challenges.



A comprehensive understanding of the CSTO offers insights into regional security architectures, the geopolitical landscape of Eurasia, and India's strategic considerations—essential knowledge areas for UPSC exams.

3. Security and Defense **Alliances**

These are groups of countries that promise to protect each other in case of threats like war, terrorism, or cyberattacks. The most powerful among them is NATO (North Atlantic Treaty **Organization)**, which is a military alliance mainly led by the US and European countries. SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) also deals with regional security, especially in Asia. Other alliances, like CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) and ANZUS (Australia-New Zealand-US Treaty), focus on protecting their member countries. These organizations strengthen military cooperation and prevent conflicts.

3.1 UNSC

Already Covered in 1.1.1.2

3.2 NATO

Already Covered in 1.2.9

3.3 CSTO

Already Covered in 3.3

3.4 SCO

Already Covered in 1.2.10

3.5 OPCW

Already Covered in 1.1.4.8

3.6 IAEA

Already Covered in 1.1.4.6



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4. Economic and Financial **Institutions**

These organizations control money and economic policies at the global level. They help countries with financial crises, trade rules, and development projects. The most important ones are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which gives loans to countries in trouble, and the World Bank, which helps poor countries build roads, schools, and hospitals. Other groups like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), New Development Bank (BRICS Bank), and AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) provide financial support, especially to developing nations. These organizations shape the global economy and influence how countries grow.

4.1 IMF

Already Covered in 1.1.2.6

4.2 WORLD BANK GROUP

Already Covered in 1.1.2.11

4.3 Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.

Name of the Organization

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ADB is a multilateral development bank that provides financial and technical assistance to its member countries for development projects and programs, aiming to foster economic growth and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Year of Formation

• Established on December 19, 1966.

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, Asia faced significant challenges, including widespread poverty and the need for economic development. The ADB was formed to facilitate regional cooperation and provide financial support for development projects to improve living standards and economic growth in member countries.

Type

Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City 1550, Metro Manila, Philippines.

Members

As of 2024, ADB has 69 member countries.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to countries in the Asia-Pacific region and other regions that are members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as developed countries from other regions. Notably, Israel is poised to join ADB as its newest member, with formalization expected soon.

India's Membership

• Yes – Founding regional member in 1966. India is one of ADB's largest borrowing members.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- ADB's primary objectives include:
 - » Promoting economic growth and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.





- » Providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to support development projects.
- » Focusing on areas such as infrastructure, education, environment, regional integration, sustainable and development.

Recent Activities

- **Climate Finance Initiatives:** In November 2024. ADB announced an increase in climate-related lending by up to \$7.2 billion, supported by sovereign guarantees from the United States and Japan.
- Membership Expansion: Israel is set to become a new member, with formalization expected soon.
- Strategic Lending Goals: ADB aims to allocate 50% of its annual lending to climate finance by 2030, up from the current 35% target.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Climate Adaptation Funding: ADB highlighted the need for increased spending on climate adaptation in Asia, estimating annual requirements between \$102 billion to \$431 billion.
- Economic Growth **Forecasts:** In September 2024, ADB raised its growth forecast for developing Asian economies to 5.0% for 2024, citing strong demand for technology products.

India-Specific Developments

- **Project** Sovereign Lending and **Commitments:**
 - » In 2023, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed \$2.6 billion in sovereign funding to India. These funds were allocated to various projects aimed
 - » Strengthening urban development.
 - » Supporting industrial corridor development.

- » Promoting power sector reforms.
- » Building climate resilience.
- » Enhancing horticulture.
- » Improving connectivity to economic clusters. markets, and rural communities.

Climate Financing Initiatives:

- » In line with India's climate action agenda, ADB has significantly increased its focus on climate financing.
- » In 2024, ADB's lending to India surpassed \$4 billion, with \$4.24 billion dedicated to sovereign financing and \$575 million to private sector financing.

Key Infrastructure Projects:

- » Mumbai Metro Line 2: ADB provided substantial funding for the development of Mumbai's Metro Line 2, enhancing urban mobility and reducing traffic congestion in the city.
- » East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC): ADB is supporting the development of the ECEC, India's first coastal economic corridor, which spans approximately 2,500 kilometers along the eastern coastline. This project aims to boost industrial growth and regional economic integration.

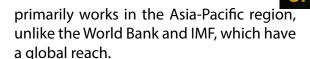
Educational Collaborations for **Development:**

» In 2024, ADB partnered with the International Finance Facility Education (IFFEd) to authorize an initial disbursement of over \$100 million. This funding is designated to improve education in ten Asian countries, including India, addressing critical issues such as global illiteracy and the aftermath of pandemic-induced school closures.

Comparison with other Orgs

How ADB Differs from Similar Organizations Regional Focus: ADB





- **Project-Based Approach:** ADB funds infrastructure, education, health, and climate projects, similar to the World Bank but with a stronger emphasis on regional development.
- Climate Finance Leadership: ADB is increasing its climate financing and plans to allocate 50% of its lending to climaterelated projects by 2030.
- Funding Mechanism: Unlike the IMF, which provides short-term financial support to stabilize economies, ADB provides long-term project funding through loans, grants, and technical assistance.
- **Governance:** ADB's decisions are influenced by its member countries, ensuring projects align with regional development goals.

Key Differences from the World Bank & **IMF**

- World Bank: Focuses on long-term poverty reduction worldwide.
- **IMF:** Primarily stabilizes global financial systems and offers short-term financial aid to countries in crisis.
- Concentrates regional on infrastructure and economic growth in Asia-Pacific.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: Ouestions have been asked regarding the role of ADB in India's development, its functions, and recent initiatives.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » India is a founding member and the fourth-largest shareholder of ADB.
 - significant contributions » ADB's infrastructure and climate finance in India.

» Recent initiatives and funding commitments by ADB in the Asia-Pacific region.

4.4 African Development Bank

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is a regional multilateral development finance institution established to promote economic and social progress across the African continent.

Name of the Organization

• African Development Bank (AfDB)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The AfDB is a regional multilateral development finance institution dedicated to supporting the economic development and social progress of African countries.

Year of Formation

Established 1964; operations in commenced in 1966.

Why they formed it?

Post-independence, African nations sought to foster economic unity and development. The AfDB was created to mobilize resources for the continent's development and reduce reliance on external financial institutions.

Type

Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Members

81 member countries: 54 African nations and 27 non-African countries.

Who are its members?



Membership is open to African countries and non-African countries interested in Africa's development. Notably, nonregional members were allowed to join starting in 1982, enhancing the bank's resource base and expertise.

India's Membership

Yes - India joined as a non-regional member (1983). (India contributes capital to AfDB and engages in Africa-India development cooperation.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The AfDB aims to:
 - » Promote sustainable economic growth.
 - » Reduce poverty in Africa.
 - » Provide financing for development projects and programs.
 - » Mobilize resources for investment in African countries.
 - » Offer technical assistance and policy advice to support development efforts.

Recent Activities

- **Financial Stability Initiatives:** In February 2025, African leaders approved the creation of the African Financial Stability Mechanism (AFSM), hosted by the AfDB, to prevent potential debt crises by providing concessional loans to member countries.
- Innovative Financing: In January 2024, under the leadership of CFO Hassatou N'Sele, the AfDB issued a groundbreaking \$750 million "hybrid" bond to scale up climate finance without burdening African governments.
- Infrastructure **Development:** December 2024, the AfDB approved a €650 million loan to Morocco to enhance transportation infrastructure in preparation for the 2030 World Cup.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Green Economy Summit Sponsorship:** In February 2025, the AfDB sponsored Africa's Green Economy Summit, focusing on building a climate-resilient Africa through investment and innovation in green and blue economies.
- Macroeconomic Performance Report: The AfDB released its 2025 Macroeconomic Performance Outlook and projecting real GDP growth in Africa to accelerate to 4.1% in 2025 and 4.4% in 2026, attributed to economic reforms and improved fiscal positions.
- Mission 300 Initiative: Launched in January 2025, this initiative aims to connect 300 million Africans to electricity by 2030, with the AfDB committing \$10-15 billion to the effort.

India-Specific Developments

- **Membership and Contributions:**
 - » Membership: India has been a nonregional member of the AfDB since December 6, 1983.
 - » Financial Contributions:
 - Africa Digital Financial Inclusion Facility (ADFI): In March 2023, India announced a \$2 million contribution to ADFI, aiming to enhance digital financial inclusion across Africa.
 - □ Technical Cooperation **Agreement:** In March 2024, India signed a bilateral Technical Cooperation Agreement with the AfDB, contributing \$6 million towards a new trust fund managed by the Bank.

Collaborative Initiatives:

- » Africa-India **Cooperation:** India has been actively engaging with African nations through platforms like the Indo-Africa Business Conclave, emphasizing partnerships in healthcare, infrastructure, and capacity building.
- » Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC): Launched in 2017, the AAGC is a

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collaborative initiative between India Japan, and African countries, focusing on development projects in health, agriculture, disaster management, and skill enhancement.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Regional Focus:** Unlike global institutions like the World Bank and IMF, the AfDB concentrates exclusively on Africa's development needs.
- Membership Composition: The AfDB includes both African and non-African countries, fostering a blend of regional insight and external expertise.
- Operational **Emphasis:** The prioritizes infrastructure development, regional integration, and poverty reduction tailored to African contexts.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: While specific questions on the AfDB are rare, understanding its role is crucial for topics related to international organizations and regional development in Africa.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » Established in 1964 to promote economic and social development in Africa.
 - » Headquartered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.
 - » Comprises 81 member countries, including 27 non-African nations.
 - » Focuses on infrastructure, poverty reduction, and regional integration.
 - » Engages in innovative financing mechanisms to support sustainable development.

4.5 AIIB

Infrastructure The Asian Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development

bank established to enhance infrastructure development and economic integration in Asia and beyond.

Name of the Organization

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The AIIB is a multilateral development bank focused on financing infrastructure projects that promote sustainable economic development and regional connectivity. Its mission is "Financing Infrastructure for Tomorrow," emphasizing infrastructure with sustainability at its core.

Year of Formation

Established in 2016.

Why they formed it?

The AIIB was conceived to address the substantial infrastructure financing gap in Asia, estimated to be in the trillions of dollars. Traditional financial institutions were unable to meet this demand fully, prompting the creation of a new multilateral bank to mobilize resources for infrastructure development. Additionally, the AIIB provides an avenue for China to play a more significant role in global economic governance.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Beijing, China.

Members

As of 2025, the AIIB has 110 approved members worldwide.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to members of the

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the Asian Development Bank. Notably, major economies such as the United States and Japan have not joined the AIIB. China holds the largest voting share, reflecting its significant financial contribution to the bank.

India's Membership

 Yes – India is a founding member of AIIB (joined in 2016) and is the second-largest shareholder.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The AIIB aims to:
 - » Promote sustainable infrastructure development.
 - » Enhance regional connectivity and economic integration.
 - » Mobilize private capital for infrastructure projects.
 - » Support projects that are financially and environmentally sustainable.
 - » Focus on sectors such as energy, transportation, urban development, and water supply.

Recent Activities

- Climate Finance Commitment: The AllB has set a target to ensure that 50% of its approved financing by 2025 is directed toward climate finance, reflecting its commitment to support the Paris Agreement.
- Global Expansion: The bank has extended its financing beyond Asia, including projects in Latin America and Africa, thereby broadening its global impact.
- Suspension of Operations in Russia: In response to geopolitical developments, the AIIB suspended its operations in Russia and Belarus in 2022.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Financing Agreements: In February 2025, the AIIB signed a memorandum of understanding with Turkey to provide \$5 billion in financing for public sector projects over three years, focusing on sustainable and green development.
- Promoting Local Currency Bonds: The AllB has been encouraging the issuance of renminbi-denominated bonds ("panda bonds") by developing nations to attract Chinese investors and reduce dependency on the US dollar.
- Partnerships in Latin America: In November 2024, the AllB entered into an agreement with Brazil's development bank, BNDES, for an investment of approximately \$2.89 billion to fund projects aligned with Brazil's climate initiatives and economic growth policies.

India-Specific Developments

- Membership and Shareholding:
 - » Founding Member: India is a founding member of the AIIB and holds a significant position within the organization.
 - » Second-Largest Shareholder: India is the second-largest shareholder in the AIIB, following China.

Financial Engagement:

- » Largest Beneficiary: As of August 2024, India has emerged as the largest beneficiary of AIIB financing, with the bank approving 48 projects amounting to USD 10.45 billion.
- » Sectoral Investments: The AIIB's investments in India span various sectors, including energy, transport, and public health.

• Recent Projects and Initiatives:

» ENGIE Solar Power Project: In August 2024, the AIIB committed up to INR 7.3 billion (approximately USD 88 million) to support a 400 MW solar photovoltaic plant in Gujarat, co-financed with the



Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- » Endiya Partners Fund III Investment: In January 2025, the AIIB approved investments in Endiya Partners Fund III under its Venture Capital Investment Program, aiming to support earlystage companies focused on green and technology-enabled infrastructure in India and Southeast Asia.
- » AMPIN Energy Transition Funding: In 2023, the AIIB, along with Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Intermediate Capital Group, invested up to USD 250 million in AMPIN Energy Transition, an Indian renewable energy company, to bolster its renewable energy portfolio.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Regional Focus with Global Reach: While the AIIB primarily focuses on Asia, it has expanded its operations globally, distinguishing it from other regional development banks.
- **Lean Organizational Structure:** The AllB operates with a streamlined governance model, aiming for efficient and timely project approvals.
- **Emphasis on Sustainability:** A significant portion of the AIIB's financing is directed toward sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure, aligning with global environmental goals.
- **Collaboration with Other MDBs:** The AllB often co-finances projects with institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, leveraging combined expertise and resources.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions:
 - » The AIIB has been featured in UPSC examinations. For instance, the 2019 exam included a question assessing knowledge about AIIB's membership and India's shareholding.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** The AIIB was established in 2016 with its headquarters in Beijing, China.
- » Membership: As of 2025, the AIIB comprises 110 approved members worldwide.

» Shareholding Structure:

- » **China:** Largest shareholder with 26.61% voting shares.
- » **India:** Second-largest shareholder with 7.6% voting shares.
- » Focus Areas: The AIIB primarily invests sustainable infrastructure developmental projects. including urban energy, transportation, development, and water supply.
- » India's Engagement: India is not only a founding member but also the largest beneficiary of AIIB financing, with significant investments across various infrastructure sectors.

Understanding the All B's structure, objectives, and India's involvement is crucial for UPSC exams. especially concerning topics in international relations and economic development.

4.6 New Development Bank (NDB-BRICS)

The New Development Bank (NDB), formerly known as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Its primary purpose is to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries (EMDCs).

Name of the Organization

New Development Bank (NDB)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The NDB is an international financial



institution that provides funding for infrastructure and sustainable development projects. It offers financial products such as loans, guarantees, equity participation, and other financial instruments to both public and private sector

Year of Formation

projects.

 The NDB was established in July 2014, following the signing of the Agreement on the New Development Bank during the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil. The bank became operational in July 2015.

Why they formed it?

The idea of creating the NDB was proposed during the 4th BRICS Summit in 2012, held in New Delhi, India. The motivation behind establishing the bank was to address the infrastructure financing gap in BRICS and other emerging economies, reduce dependence on existing financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and promote a more balanced global financial architecture.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• Shanghai, China

Members

 As of 2024, the NDB has expanded its membership beyond the founding BRICS nations to include: Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Egypt, Algeria.

This brings the total number of members to ten. Membership is open to members of the United Nations, with the stipulation that the BRICS nations must collectively hold at least 55% of the voting power.

Who are its members?

• The NDB aims to expand its membership to enhance its global reach and resource base. The inclusion of countries like Egypt and the United Arab Emirates reflects the bank's strategy to strengthen ties with nations beyond the BRICS bloc. Notably, Algeria was authorized to join the NDB in August 2024. However, in October 2024, Algeria decided not to formalize its membership, citing political considerations within the BRICS framework.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India co-founded the NDB in 2015 as one of the five BRICS countries.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- The NDB's primary objectives include:
 - » Financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects that have a significant development impact in member countries.
 - » Mobilizing resources for such projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation, and other financial instruments.
 - » Establishing partnerships with other multilateral development institutions and national development banks to coordinate efforts and share expertise.

The bank focuses on sectors such as clean energy, transport infrastructure, water and sanitation, environmental protection, social infrastructure, and digital infrastructure.

Recent Activities

- Expansion of Membership: Between 2021 and 2024, the NDB admitted several new members, including Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Egypt, and Algeria (though Algeria later chose not to formalize its membership).
- Leadership Changes: In March 2023, former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff was elected as the President of the NDB,



becoming the first woman to lead the institution.

Project Financing: The NDB has continued to approve and finance projects across its member countries, focusing infrastructure development sustainability. Over the next five years, the bank expects to approve USD 30 billion in new projects, with 40% dedicated to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Climate Financing Commitment: The NDB has pledged that 40% of its project approvals over the next five years will be directed towards climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- **Global Partnerships:** The bank has been actively seeking to establish partnerships with other multilateral development banks and financial institutions to co-finance projects and share best practices.

India-Specific Developments

- **Project Approvals and Investments:**
 - » Madhya Pradesh State Highways Improvement Project: In December 2024, the NDB approved a loan of up to USD 490 million to India for the enhancement of state highways in Madhya Pradesh. This project aims to strengthen transport infrastructure widening and reconstructing roads, thereby improving connectivity between district headquarters, major commercial centers, and industrial areas.
 - » Gujarat Rural Roads Program: In 2023, the NDB signed a USD 500 million loan agreement with India to develop approximately 13,500 kilometers of rural roads in Gujarat. This initiative is expected to benefit around 12.5 million people by providing better connectivity and supporting economic development in rural regions.
 - » Integrated Sewerage System Imphal, Manipur: The NDB extended

- a USD 115 million loan to India for the development of an integrated sewerage system in Imphal. The project includes the construction of sewerage treatment plants, pumping stations, and a comprehensive sewer network to enhance sanitation services and improve the water quality of the Imphal River.
- » Lamphelpat Waterbody Rejuvenation Project: A loan of USD 70.27 million was sanctioned by the NDB for the reiuvenation of the Lamphelpat waterbody in Imphal. This project aims to prevent urban flooding, improve water security, and promote ecotourism, contributing to sustainable urban development in the region.

• Evaluation and Oversight:

» Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE): In 2024, the NDB's Independent Evaluation Office initiated its first Country Portfolio Evaluation focusing on India. By the end of 2023, the NDB had approved 26 projects in India, underscoring the country's significant engagement with the bank. The CPE aims to assess the partnership between the NDB and India in fostering economic and social development, covering activities from 2015 to 2023.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Shareholding** Governance and Structure:
 - » New Development Bank (NDB): The NDB emphasizes equality among its members—Brazil, founding Russia, India, China, and South Africa—each holding an equal share in the bank's capital and voting rights. This structure ensures balanced decision-making and reflects the collaborative spirit of the BRICS nations.
 - » Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB): In contrast, the AIIB's governance is influenced by the economic size and contributions of its members, with



China being the largest shareholder. This structure allows for a broader membership base, including several developed countries, which enhances its credit rating and financial capacity.

Operational Focus and Scale:

- » **NDB:** Primarily focuses on financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects within BRICS countries and other emerging economies. As of 2024, the NDB has disbursed approximately USD 15 billion in infrastructure financing.
- » World Bank: Operates on a global scale, providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries worldwide. In 2021 alone, the World Bank Group disbursed over USD 60 billion, highlighting its extensive reach and resource base.

Project Approval and Implementation:

- » **NDB:** Aims for a streamlined project approval process to address the urgent infrastructure needs of its member countries.
- » Traditional Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): Often have more prolonged project cycles due to comprehensive safeguard policies and procedures, which, while ensuring project quality and social/environmental considerations, can extend the time from project proposal to implementation.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions:

» The NDB has been a topic in UPSC examinations, particularly in the context of international organizations and India's role in global economic forums. Questions have focused on the bank's establishment, objectives, and India's involvement.

Key Facts to Remember:

» Establishment: The NDB was founded

- in July 2014 during the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, and became operational in July 2015.
- » Headquarters: Located in Shanghai, China.
- » Membership: Initially comprising the five BRICS countries, the NDB has expanded to include Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Egypt, bringing the total membership to nine as of 2024.
- » India's Role: As a founding member, India holds an equal share in the NDB's capital and has been a significant beneficiary of its financing, with multiple infrastructure projects approved across various sectors.
- » Objective: To mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies, aiming to complement existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions.

NDB's Understanding the structure, objectives, and India's active participation is crucial for UPSC exams, especially in topics related to international relations, global economic governance, and infrastructure development.

4.7 OECD

Already Covered in 1.2.6

4.8 OPEC

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent intergovernmental organization established to coordinate and unify petroleum policies among member countries, ensuring the stabilization of oil markets to secure efficient and economic supplies to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.

Name of the Organization

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting **Countries (OPEC)**

What it is (Nature and Function)

OPEC is an intergovernmental organization that collaborates among oil-producing countries to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price on the world market. This coordination aims to ensure stable and fair oil prices for both producers and consumers, as well as a regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations.

Year of Formation

 OPEC was founded in September 1960 during the Baghdad Conference held from September 10 to 14.

Why they formed it?

In the late 1950s, multinational oil companies unilaterally reduced the prices of crude oil, significantly impacting the revenues of oilproducing countries. In response, five nations— Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela came together to form OPEC, aiming to unify and coordinate their petroleum policies to safeguard their interests and gain greater control over their natural resources.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Vienna, Austria

Members

As of February 2025, OPEC comprises 13 member countries: Algeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela.

Membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and shares the ideals of the organization, subject to approval by existing members.

Who are its members?

 OPEC's membership has evolved over time, with some countries joining or leaving based on their national interests and oil production statuses. Notably, countries like Indonesia have suspended and reactivated their membership due to changes in their oil-exporting capacities. The organization's decisions require unanimous agreement, ensuring that all member countries have a say in its policies.

India's Membership

No – India is not an OPEC member (India is an oil importer, not exporter).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **OPEC's primary objectives include:**
 - » Coordinating and unifying petroleum policies among member countries.
 - » Ensuring the stabilization of oil markets to secure efficient, economic, and regular supplies of petroleum to consumers.
 - » Providing a steady income to producers.
 - » Ensuring a fair return on capital for investors in the petroleum industry.

To achieve these goals, OPEC assesses market conditions and determines appropriate production levels to influence oil prices and maintain market balance.

Recent Activities

- Brazil's Inclusion in OPEC+: In February 2025, Brazil announced its decision to join OPEC+, the extended group of oilexporting nations. This move allows Brazil to participate in strategic dialogues among oil-producing countries without binding production commitments.
- **Production Adjustments:** Throughout 2024 and early 2025, OPEC+ made several decisions regarding oil production levels



to address market dynamics:

- November » In 2024, the alliance postponed planned production increases due to weaker demand and competition from non-member countries.
- » In December 2024, OPEC extended its existing oil output cuts by one month, lasting until the end of December 2024, to stabilize prices amid fluctuating demand.
- **Market Stabilization Efforts:** In February 2025, OPEC emphasized its long-term approach to ensuring market stability, focusing on balanced oil markets despite external pressures.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Oil Market Dynamics: In early 2025, OPEC addressed concerns over potential crude supply shortages due to geopolitical tensions, highlighting the importance of spare production capacity held by key members like Saudi Arabia to stabilize global oil markets.
- **Collaborations on Climate and Energy:** In November 2024, during COP29 in Baku, OPEC and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) strengthened their collaboration on climate and energy issues, emphasizing the significance of their partnership in addressing global challenges.

India-Specific Developments

- Increased OPEC Imports: In 2024, OPEC's share in India's annual oil imports rose for the first time in nine years, increasing from 49.6% in 2023 to 51.5%. This shift was influenced by reduced Russian oil supplies and heightened demand from Indian refiners for Middle Eastern crude.
- High-Level Energy Dialogues: The 6th High-Level Meeting of the OPEC-India Energy Dialogue took place in late 2023, emphasizing the strategic importance of the OPEC-India relationship. Discussions

- focused on energy security, market stability, and collaborative efforts to address mutual challenges.
- Calls for Production Adjustments: In September 2024, India urged OPEC+ to increase oil production to meet the country's rising fuel demand. Despite OPEC+'s decision to delay planned production increases, India emphasized the necessity for higher output from major producers to ensure market stability and reasonable pricing.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Market Influence: OPEC, comprising 13 member countries, controls about 40% of the world's crude oil production and over 80% of proven oil reserves. This significant share allows OPEC to influence global oil prices by coordinating production levels among members.
- **OPEC+ Collaboration:** To enhance its market influence, OPEC collaborates with non-member oil-producing countries, forming the OPEC+ alliance. This coalition includes major producers like Russia, aiming to coordinate production policies and stabilize the global oil market.
- **Comparison with Other Entities:** Unlike individual national oil companies or multinational corporations, OPEC operates as a collective of sovereign nations, making decisions through consensus to manage oil production and pricing. This structure differentiates it from corporate entities and other international organizations that may not have the same level of coordinated policy-making.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:**
 - » The UPSC examination has featured questions related to OPEC, focusing on its objectives, member countries, and its impact on global oil prices. For instance, questions have asked about the reasons behind fluctuations in crude oil prices



and OPEC's role in such changes.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Formation: OPEC was established in 1960 by five founding members: Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
- » Headquarters: Located in Vienna, Austria.
- » **Membership:** As of 2025, OPEC consists of 13 member countries, primarily from the Middle East, Africa, and South America.
- » Objectives: OPEC aims to coordinate and unify petroleum policies among member countries to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers, ensure efficient and regular supply to consuming nations, and provide a fair return on capital for investors.
- » India's Relationship with OPEC: India is not a member of OPEC but maintains a significant relationship due to its status as a major oil importer. High-level dialogues and strategic partnerships have been established to address energy security and market stability.
- **Developments:** » Recent India's increasing import of OPEC oil, active participation in energy dialogues, and calls for production adjustments highlight its ongoing engagement with OPEC to manage domestic energy needs and address global oil market dynamics.

Understanding OPEC's structure, objectives, and its relationship with major oil-importing countries like India is crucial for UPSC exams, especially in topics related to international relations, energy security, and global economic policies.

5. Trade and Commerce **Organizations**

These organizations make international trade easier by setting rules and reducing extra taxes (tariffs) between countries. The most important is the World Trade Organization (WTO), which makes sure trade between countries is fair and without unnecessary restrictions. RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), and Mercosur are trade agreements that help countries in specific regions trade more freely. These organizations promote global business and economic growth by making trade smoother.

5.1 WTO

Already Covered in 1.1.4.10

5.2 WCO

Name of the Organization

• World Customs Organization (WCO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

WCO is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of customs administrations worldwide. It serves as a global center of customs expertise, developing international standards, fostering cooperation, and facilitating legitimate trade while securing the international supply chain.

Year of Formation

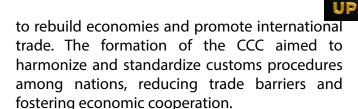
• Established on January 26, 1953, as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC); adopted the working name World **Customs Organization in 1994.**

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, there was a pressing need







Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Brussels, Belgium

Members

 As of 2025, the WCO comprises 186 customs administrations, representing approximately 98% of global trade.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to customs administrations of sovereign states. The extensive membership base underscores the WCO's global influence commitment to facilitating international trade.

India's Membership

Yes – India's customs administration joined the WCO (Customs Co-operation Council) in 1971. (India is an active WCO member, currently Vice-Chair for the Asia-Pacific region.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Standardization:** Develops international conventions and tools, such as the Harmonized System (HS) for commodity classification, to standardize customs procedures.
- **Trade** Facilitation: Promotes the simplification and harmonization of customs processes to expedite the movement of goods across borders.
- **Security:** Implements frameworks like the

- SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade, ensuring supply chain security.
- Capacity Building: Provides training and technical assistance to member administrations to enhance their capabilities.
- **Enforcement:** Coordinates efforts to combat illicit trade, including drug trafficking, counterfeiting, and smuggling.

Recent Activities

- Leadership Change: In June 2023, Ian Saunders from the United States was elected as the WCO Secretary General, assuming office on January 1, 2024.
- **Digital Initiatives:** Launched the **"WCO Trade Tools"** online platform, integrating the Harmonized System, Rules of Origin, and Valuation to provide a comprehensive for international resource stakeholders.
- Global Collaboration: Participated in the Global Conference on Cooperation in Enforcement Matters in New Delhi, India, in November 2023, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in customs enforcement.

Recent News & Initiatives

- E-Learning Platforms: The WCO has enhanced its e-learning platforms, offering comprehensive training for customs professionals worldwide to adapt to evolving trade environments.
- Focus on Data Analytics: Emphasizing the role of data in informed decision-making, the WCO has encouraged members to adopt data-driven approaches to improve customs processes.

India-Specific Developments

Trade Facilitation and Time Release **Studies (TRS):** India has been proactive in enhancing trade facilitation measures. By February 2022, the country fulfilled

all its commitments under the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. A significant aspect of this commitment is the annual conduct of Time Release Studies (TRS) to assess the efficiency of cargo clearance processes. Initially conducted at the Jawaharlal Nehru Custom House, these studies have expanded since 2021 to a national level, covering major seaports, inland dry ports, air cargo complexes, and land customs stations. The findings are publicly shared and reported to the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Committee, reflecting India's dedication transparency and continuous improvement in customs operations.

- Collaboration with the WCO: In October 2024, India, in partnership with Japan and Korea, funded the WCO Regional Customs Laboratory Professionals Programme for 2024/2025. This initiative aims to enhance the technical expertise of customs laboratory professionals, ensuring accurate and efficient analysis of goods, which is crucial for correct tariff classification and trade facilitation.
- Policy Reforms in Customs Duties: In February 2025, during the annual budget presentation, India announced removal of customs duties on waste and scrap of twelve critical minerals, including antimony, cobalt, tungsten, and copper scrap. This policy aims to secure the availability of these materials for domestic manufacturing, reflecting India's strategic focus on bolstering its industrial base and reducing dependency on imports for essential raw materials.
- Import Regulations for Electronics: In September 2024, India introduced a policy requiring companies to seek fresh approvals for importing laptops, tablets, and other related electronics starting January 1, 2025. This move is part of India's broader strategy to monitor and manage electronic imports, encouraging local manufacturing and ensuring a trusted supply chain for these critical products.

Comparison with other Orgs

- With Global Reach: 186 member administrations, the WCO's influence spans nearly the entire global trade landscape, unlike some regional customs organizations.
- Comprehensive Scope: WCO The addresses a wide range of customs-related issues, from standardization and trade facilitation to enforcement and capacity building, providing a holistic approach to customs administration.
- Standard-Setting Authority: As the developer of the Harmonized System and other key international conventions, the WCO plays a pivotal role in setting global customs standards.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The **UPSC** examination has featured questions on international organizations, including the WCO, focusing on its functions, conventions like the Harmonized System, and India's role in global customs cooperation.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Formation: Established in 1953 as the Customs Co-operation Council; renamed the World Customs Organization in 1994.
 - » Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.
 - » Membership: 186 administrations, covering about 98% of global trade.
 - » **Key Instruments:** Harmonized System (HS), Revised Kyoto Convention, SAFE Framework of Standards.
 - » India's **Engagement:** Active participation in WCO initiatives, hosting international conferences, and implementing WCO-recommended practices to enhance trade facilitation and enforcement.

5.3 ISO



Name of the Organization

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization that develops and publishes international standards across a wide range of industries and sectors.

Year of Formation

Founded on February 23, 1947.

Why they formed it?

Post-World War II, there was a recognized coordination need for international unification of industrial standards to facilitate global trade and ensure product compatibility and safety.

Type

Non-governmental organization (NGO)

Status

Active

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland

Members

As of 2024, ISO comprises 167 national standards bodies.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to national standards bodies representing countries. Each member has one vote, ensuring representation. egual Notably, collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on electrical and electronic standards.

India's Membership

Yes – India (through the Bureau of Indian Standards) is a founder member of ISO

(since 1947).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Development:** Formulates Standard international standards to ensure quality, safety, efficiency, and interoperability of products and services.
- Facilitating Trade: Aims to break down barriers to international trade by providing common standards among nations.
- Innovation Support: Encourages innovation by setting frameworks that industries can build upon.

Recent Activities

- **Artificial Intelligence Standardization:** ISO, through its subcommittee ISO/ IEC JTC 1/SC 42, has been actively developing standards in the area of Artificial Intelligence to address emerging technologies and their global implications.
- Environmental Management: ISO has been promoting the adoption of ISO 14001, focusing on environmental management systems to help organizations enhance their environmental performance.

Recent News & Initiatives

Net Zero Guidelines: In collaboration with Colombia's ICONTEC, ISO is developing an independently verifiable international standard on net zero, aiming for launch at COP30 in 2025. This initiative seeks to provide a clear pathway for organizations to achieve net zero emissions and ensure global consistency in sustainability efforts.

India-Specific Developments

Hosting the 64th International Sugar Organization (ISO) Council Meeting: In June 2024, India hosted the 64th ISO Council Meeting in New Delhi, bringing together delegates from over 30 countries to discuss critical issues in the sugar and biofuel sectors. As the world's largest consumer and second-largest producer of sugar, India was nominated to chair the



ISO for 2024.

- BIS Collaboration with Indian Institute of Science (IISc): In July 2024, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) signed Memorandum of Understanding with IISc Bengaluru to establish the 'BIS Standardization Chair Professor.' This initiative aims to promote collaborative activities in standardization and conformity assessment, integrating Indian standards into academic curricula and fostering active academic participation in standards formulation.
- Implementation Mandatory of BIS Standards for Chemicals and Petrochemicals: In July 2024, India enforcement announced the mandatory BIS certification for chemicals and petrochemical products, applicable to both domestically manufactured and imported items. This regulation, effective from October 2024, aims to ensure adherence to stringent quality standards, preventing the use of hazardous and substandard products in the market.
- **Expansion of Quality Compliance** Requirements: By February 2025, the Indian government expanded quality compliance by mandating Quality Control Orders (QCOs) for over 150 products, ranging from household appliances to industrial materials. This move, overseen by BIS, aims to enforce stricter safety and performance standards across various sectors, enhancing consumer safety and product reliability.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Global Reach: ISO stands out for extensive global membership, encompassing 167 national standards bodies, which facilitates widespread international consensus on standards.
- **Diverse Scope:** Unlike organizations with a specific focus, ISO develops standards across virtually all sectors, from technology and manufacturing to healthcare and agriculture.

Non-Governmental Structure: As an NGO, ISO operates independently of governmental influence, allowing for a more flexible and industry-driven approach to standardization.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Ouestions: The UPSC examination has included questions related to ISO standards, particularly focusing on their impact on trade, quality management, and India's involvement in international standardization efforts.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » ISO 9001: A widely adopted standard quality management systems, emphasizing customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.
- » **ISO 14001:** Focuses on environmental management guiding systems, their organizations enhance environmental performance.
- » India's Participation: Through the Bureau of Indian Standards, India plays a significant role in ISO's activities, contributing to and adopting international standards to align with global best practices.

Understanding ISO's role in alobal standardization, its collaborative efforts, and India's active participation is crucial for exams, especially in topics related to international trade, quality management, and economic development.

5.4 RCEP

Already Covered in 2.2.3

5.5 ICO

Name of the Organization

International Coffee Organization (ICO)





What it is (Nature and Function)

The ICO is an intergovernmental organization that serves as a global forum for coffee-exporting and coffee-importing countries. It aims to strengthen the global coffee sector and promote its sustainable expansion by facilitating international cooperation, providing market information, and addressing challenges faced by the coffee industry.

Year of Formation

Established in 1963.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1960s, coffee was a vital commodity for many developing countries, but the market was plagued by price volatility and economic instability. To address these issues, the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) was negotiated in 1962 under the United Nations' auspices, leading to the establishment of the ICO in 1963. The organization's primary goal was to stabilize the coffee market through international cooperation and agreements.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• London, United Kingdom.

Members

 As of February 2022, the ICO comprises 49 member countries, including 42 coffee-exporting nations and 7 coffeeimporting nations.

Who are its members?

 Membership is open to any country involved in the coffee trade, either as an exporter or importer. Notable inclusions are major coffee producers like Brazil and Colombia, while significant consumers like the United States have withdrawn from the organization, with the U.S. officially exiting in June 2018.

India's Membership

• **Yes** – India is a member as a coffeeexporting country. (India's Coffee Board represents it in the ICO.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Market Stabilization:** Historically, the ICO administered a quota system under the International Coffee Agreements to stabilize coffee prices.
- **Sustainability Promotion:** Encourages sustainable coffee production practices to improve living standards in developing countries.
- **Market Transparency:** Provides comprehensive data on coffee production, exports, imports, and consumption to inform stakeholders.
- **International Cooperation:** Serves as a platform for dialogue between coffee-producing and coffee-consuming countries.

Recent Activities

- International Coffee Agreement 2022: In 2023, the ICO introduced the International Coffee Agreement 2022, aiming to enhance cooperation among member countries and address contemporary challenges in the coffee sector.
- 138th International Coffee Council Session: Held in September 2024 in London, this session brought together member states, industry leaders, and stakeholders to discuss the future of the coffee sector and the ICO's role in promoting global coffee diplomacy.
- Advocacy on EU Deforestation Regulation: In September 2024, the ICO sought a postponement of the European Union's regulation requiring imported coffee to be sourced from deforestation-



free areas, citing challenges in meeting the imminent deadline.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **EU Deforestation Regulation Concerns:** The ICO has been actively engaging with the European Union regarding its deforestation regulation, advocating for realistic timelines and support for coffeeproducing countries to comply with new requirements.
- **Global Coffee Forum Participation:** The ICO continues to participate in global forums, collaborating with international organizations to address issues like climate change, sustainability, and economic viability in the coffee sector.

India-Specific Developments

- **Hostingthe5thWorldCoffeeConference:** In 2023, India hosted the 5th World Coffee Conference in Bengaluru, organized by the ICO. This event highlighted India's significant role in the global coffee industry and provided a platform for discussions on challenges and opportunities within the sector.
- **Ratification of the International Coffee** Agreement 2022: In May 2024, the High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom signed the International Coffee Agreement 2022, reaffirming commitment to international cooperation in the coffee sector.
- **Production and Export Statistics:** India ranks as the 6th largest global exporter of coffee, with approximately 80% of its coffee produced by smallholder farmers.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Unlike Comprehensive Focus: commodity-specific organizations that may focus solely on trade, the ICO addresses a broad spectrum of issues, including market stabilization, sustainability, and socio-economic development.
- Intergovernmental The Structure:

ICO's composition of both exporting importing member countries and facilitates balanced decision-making and comprehensive policy development.

• Historical Quota System: Historically, the ICO implemented a quota system to regulate coffee prices, a unique approach among commodity organizations.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions

- While there have been no direct questions on the International Coffee Organization (ICO), UPSC has previously asked about:
 - » Commodity-specific international organizations (e.g., OPEC, WTO, and FAO).
 - » India's role in global trade agreements and international commodity markets.
 - » Sustainability concerns in agriculture and trade policies.
 - » Government policies related to exports of agricultural commodities, including coffee.

Key Facts for Exams

- **Formation:** Established in 1963 under the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) to regulate and stabilize the global coffee market.
- **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom.
- Membership: 49 member countries, including 42 coffee-exporting nations and 7 importing countries.

India's Role:

- » India ratified the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) 2022 in May 2024.
- » Hosted the 5th World Coffee Conference in Bengaluru in 2023.
- » India is the 6th largest coffee exporter in the world, with about 80% of coffee production coming from smallholder farmers.

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Objectives:

- » Promotes sustainable coffee production and trade.
- » Ensures market stability by addressing price volatility.
- » Facilitates international cooperation in the coffee sector.

Relevance to Global Trade & UPSC **Syllabus:**

- » Related to GS Paper 2 (International Relations): Role of India in global organizations.
- » GS Paper 3 (Agriculture & Economy): Impact of trade agreements on agricultural exports, government policies on coffee production, and sustainability concerns in India's plantation sector.

Understanding ICO is crucial for topics related to international trade, India's agricultural exports, sustainable development goals (SDGs), and the impact of climate change on global commodity markets.

5.6 ICCO

Name of the Organization

International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)

What it is (Nature and Function)

- The ICCO is an intergovernmental organization that brings together cocoa-producing and cocoa-consuming countries. Its primary functions include:
 - » Facilitating international cooperation on cocoa-related issues.
 - » Promoting a sustainable world cocoa economy.
 - » Collecting and disseminating data on the global cocoa market.
 - » Implementing projects to support cocoa production and trade.

Year of Formation

Established in 1973.

Why they formed it?

In the early 1970s, the cocoa market experienced significant volatility, affecting both producers and consumers. To address these challenges, the United Nations facilitated negotiations leading to the first International Cocoa Agreement in 1972. The ICCO was established in 1973 to implement this agreement, aiming to stabilize the cocoa market and promote equitable trading practices.

Type

• Intergovernmental organization.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Members

As of 2020, the ICCO comprises 51 member countries, including both cocoa exporters and importers.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to countries involved in the cocoa trade, either as producers or consumers. Notably, while major cocoa-producing countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are members, some significant consuming countries have not joined the organization.

India's Membership

No – India is not currently a member of the cocoa agreement (India is a small cocoa producer and has been encouraged to join, but as of now it remains outside).

What it does (Key Objectives)

Market Stabilization: Aims to reduce volatility in cocoa prices through international agreements and cooperation.



- Sustainability Promotion: Encourages sustainable cocoa farming practices to ensure long-term viability of the cocoa sector.
- Data Collection and Dissemination: Provides comprehensive statistics on cocoa production, consumption, and market trends.
- **Project Implementation:** Develops and oversees projects that support cocoa farmers and enhance trade efficiency.

Recent Activities

- Relocation of Headquarters: In April 2017, the ICCO moved its headquarters from London to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to be closer to the major cocoa-producing regions.
- Market Analysis: The ICCO projected an 11% decline in global cocoa supply for the 2023-2024 season, leading to a deficit of approximately 374,000 tons.

Recent News & Initiatives

Global Cocoa Supply Concerns: In March 2024, cocoa bean prices surged to \$10,000 per tonne due to adverse weather in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, which produce 60% of the global supply. This situation highlighted issues such as underinvestment, deforestation, and child labor in the cocoa industry.

India-Specific Developments

- **Emerging Market Status:** India recognized as an emerging market for cocoa consumption. The ICCO has suggested that India should consider becoming a member to actively participate in policy discussions and benefit from international cooperation in the cocoa sector.
- Market Growth Potential: The ICCO predicts that India could become the fastest-growing cocoa market due to the country's rising wealth and currently low demand base.

Domestic Production: In the 2015–2016 period, India harvested 17,200 metric tonnes of cocoa beans, accounting for only 1.1% of the yield in Côte d'Ivoire, the largest cocoa bean producer globally.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Comprehensive Focus: Unlike some commodity organizations that focus solely on trade, the ICCO addresses a wide range of issues, including market stabilization, sustainability, and socio-economic development in the cocoa sector.
- **Balanced Representation:** The ICCO's membership includes both producing and consuming countries, facilitating balanced decision-making and policy formulation.
- **Data and Expertise:** The organization is a leading source of cocoa statistics and offers expertise in market analysis, project development, and capacity-building programs.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- **Past UPSC Questions:** While there may not have been direct questions on the ICCO, topics related to international commodity organizations, global trade agreements, and India's role in such organizations are pertinent to the UPSC syllabus.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » Formation and Purpose: Established in 1973 to implement the International Cocoa Agreement, aiming to stabilize the cocoa market and promote sustainable practices.
 - » Headquarters: Relocated to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in 2017 to be closer to major cocoa-producing regions.
 - » India's Potential Membership: As an emerging market for cocoa consumption, India's potential membership in the ICCO could influence domestic cocoa policies and international trade relations.
 - » Sustainability Initiatives: The ICCO's focus on sustainable cocoa production

alians with alobal environmental goals, making it relevant for topics on sustainable agriculture and international environmental agreements.

6. Development and Humanitarian **Organizations**

These organizations work to improve people's lives by reducing poverty, providing food and medicine, and responding to disasters. The **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP) and World Food Programme (WFP) help poor countries develop and provide food to those in need. The World Health Organization (WHO) deals with global health issues like COVID-19, while **UNICEF** focuses on helping children. Many of these organizations are part of the UN system and aim to create a better world for everyone.

6.1 IFRC

Name of the Organization

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The IFRC is the world's largest humanitarian network, comprising 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It coordinates international assistance to respond to disasters and health emergencies, promotes humanitarian values, and supports community resilience and development.

Year of Formation

Founded in 1919.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War I, there was a pressing need for a unified organization to coordinate international relief efforts and address health crises. The IFRC was established to unite national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, facilitating collaboration and enhancing the efficiency of humanitarian aid.

Type







International non-governmental organization (NGO).

Status

Active.

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Who are its members?

Membership includes National Societies from nearly every country, reflecting a diverse and global commitment to humanitarian principles. Notable inclusions are societies from both developed and developing nations, fostering a comprehensive approach to disaster response and community health.

India's Membership

Yes – India's national Red Cross (Indian Red Cross Society) is a member of the IFRC. (Countries per se aren't members, but India's Red Cross represents it in the Federation.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Disaster Response and **Recovery:** Coordinates international assistance during natural and man-made disasters
- Health and Care: Implements health programs, including disease prevention, water and sanitation, and maternal health.
- Capacity Building: Strengthens the capabilities of National Societies through training and resource support.
- Promotion of Humanitarian Values: Advocates for the protection of human dignity and the alleviation of human suffering.

Recent Activities

COVID-19 Response: Mobilized resources

- and volunteers to support vaccination health education, campaigns, provision of medical supplies globally.
- Climate Disaster Insurance Payout: In 2024, the IFRC activated an insurance policy following multiple climate-related disasters, resulting in a payout of over 7 million Swiss francs to support 1.5 million victims in countries like Nigeria and Nepal.
- Aid Worker Safety Advocacy: Addressed the increasing fatalities among aid workers, with 187 reported deaths as of August 2024, and called for enhanced protection measures.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Emergency Appeal for Lebanon: In November 2024, launched an international emergency appeal for 100 million Swiss francs to support humanitarian efforts in Lebanon amid escalating conflicts.
- **Advocacy for Local Aid Workers:** Highlighted the disproportionate impact of violence on local humanitarian workers and urged for greater protection and recognition of their sacrifices.

India-Specific Developments

- COVID-19 Response: The Indian Red Cross Society, supported by the IFRC, played a pivotal role in health and hygiene promotion, case detection, surveillance, and contact tracing during the COVID-19 surge in India.
- **Tuberculosis Control Project:** The Indian Red Cross Society's Karnataka State Branch has been implementing a Tuberculosis Control Project since January 2009, funded by USAID and UK aid through the IFRC, in collaboration with the Tuberculosis Association of India and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Comparison with other Orgs

Global Reach with Local Presence: Unlike many international NGOs, the IFRC operates through a network of National Societies deeply embedded in local communities, enabling culturally sensitive and immediate responses.

Comprehensive Scope: Addresses a wide range of humanitarian issues, from disaster response to health crises, guided by universal principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Questions: While direct questions on the IFRC are uncommon, understanding its role is crucial for topics related to international organizations, disaster management, and global health initiatives.

Key Facts to Remember:

- » Foundation: Established in 1919 to coordinate international humanitarian efforts.
- » **Membership:** Comprises 192 National Societies, including the Indian Red Cross Society.
- » **Headquarters:** Located in Geneva, Switzerland.
- » Core Areas: Disaster response, health building, services, capacity promotion of humanitarian values.
- » India's **Engagement:** Active collaboration through the Indian Red Cross Society in health programs and disaster response initiatives.

Understanding the IFRC's structure and functions provides insights into global humanitarian coordination, which is pertinent for topics in international relations and disaster management within the UPSC syllabus.

6.2 MSF

Name of the Organization

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders.

What it is (Nature and Function)

MSF is an international, independent medical humanitarian organization that provides medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters, or exclusion from healthcare.

Year of Formation

Founded in 1971.

Why they formed it?

In response to the Nigerian Civil War and the famine in Biafra, a group of French doctors and journalists recognized the need for a new aid organization that would prioritize medical ethics and bear witness to the plight of affected populations. This led to the establishment of MSF.

Type

Non-governmental organization (NGO).

Status

Active.

Headquarters

Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

MSF operates in over 70 countries, with a workforce comprising tens of thousands of health professionals, logistics and administrative staff, most of whom are hired locally.

Who are its members?

MSF's teams are composed of both international and local staff, ensuring culturally sensitive and effective medical The organization maintains care. independence by primarily relying on private donations, allowing it to operate impartially and free from political or economic influence.

India's Membership

No – Not applicable. MSF is an independent humanitarian NGO, not a state-based





organization, so India as a country has no membership. (India does host MSF field missions, but there is no state membership structure.)

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Emergency Medical **Assistance:** Responds rapidly to natural disasters, conflicts, and disease outbreaks.
- Long-term Medical Care: Provides treatment for chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malnutrition.
- Advocacy: Raises awareness about humanitarian crises and advocates for access to essential medicines.

Recent Activities

- COVID-19 Response: MSF adapted its operations to support COVID-19 treatment and prevention efforts worldwide.
- **Conflict Zones:** Continued support in areas like Yemen, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **Program Closure in Russia:** In September 2024, MSF closed its programs in Russia following an order from the Russian Justice Ministry to deregister.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Partnership: Charity Appeal December 2024, MSF was selected as one of the beneficiaries of The Guardian and Observer's charity appeal, focusing on aiding those affected by global conflicts.
- **Operations in Conflict Zones: MSF** continues to provide critical medical care in conflict-affected regions, including Gaza, where teams have been addressing the needs of displaced populations amid ongoing violence.

India-Specific Developments

Tuberculosis and HIV Care: MSF runs programs in India aimed at improving care for tuberculosis (TB), HIV, and other infectious diseases, as well as increasing

- access to essential healthcare for remote communities.
- **COVID-19 Response in Manipur:** In 2021, MSF's COVID-19 emergency response in Imphal, Manipur, included setting up treatment facilities and supporting local healthcare systems.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Operational Independence: MSF** maintains financial and operational independence, allowing it to provide impartial medical care without political interference.
- Witnessing and Advocacy: Beyond medical assistance, MSF actively speaks out about humanitarian crises, leveraging its on-the-ground experience to advocate for change.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: While there may not have been direct questions on MSF, understanding its role is pertinent for topics related to international organizations, humanitarian aid, and global health.
- Key Facts to Remember:
 - » **Foundation:** Established in 1971 in response to the Biafra crisis.
 - » **Headquarters:** Located in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - » **Operations:** Active in over 70 countries, including significant programs in India.
 - **Principles:** Impartiality, independence, and neutrality guide MSF's actions.
 - » **Recognition:** Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999 for its humanitarian efforts.

Understanding MSF's mission and operations provides insights into the complexities of delivering medical humanitarian aid in diverse and challenging environments, aligning with topics in international relations and global health within the UPSC syllabus.

7. Human Rights and **International Justice Organizations**

These organizations protect people's rights and punish those who commit serious crimes. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and Amnesty International work to stop human rights violations like torture and unfair treatment. Courts like the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigate war crimes and punish leaders who commit crimes against humanity. These organizations make sure that justice is served globally and that every person's rights are respected.

7.1 International Criminal Court

Name of the Organization

International Criminal Court (ICC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The ICC is a permanent international court established to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of the gravest offenses, including genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression.

Year of Formation

The Rome Statute, which established the ICC, was adopted on July 17, 1998, and the court began functioning on July 1, 2002.

Why they formed it?

The ICC was created in response to the atrocities committed during the 20th century, aiming to provide a permanent judicial body to hold individuals accountable for serious international crimes, thereby deterring future violations and promoting justice.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

• The Hague, Netherlands

Members

As of January 2025, 125 countries are States Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to all countries willing to adhere to the Rome Statute. Notably, major powers such as the United States, China, Russia, and India have not joined, often citing concerns over sovereignty and potential political misuse of the court's authority.

India's Membership

No – India is not a State Party to the Rome Statute (India has not signed or ratified the ICC treaty).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Investigation and Prosecution:** Pursues individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.
- **Complementarity:** Acts as a court of last resort, intervening only when national jurisdictions are unwilling or unable to prosecute.
- Deterrence and Justice: Aims to deter future atrocities and deliver justice to victims.

Recent Activities

Arrest Warrants: Issued warrants for Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2023 over alleged war crimes in Ukraine.



- Investigations: Continued probes into conflicts in Ukraine, Venezuela, Myanmar, and the Philippines.
- Operational Challenges: Faced political pressures and non-cooperation from certain member states, impacting its effectiveness.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Arrest Warrants for Israeli Leaders: In November 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, alleging war crimes during the Gaza conflict.
- Sanctions by the United States: In February 2025, the U.S. imposed sanctions on ICC's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, following investigations into alleged war crimes by Israel.

India-Specific Developments

- Non-Membership: India remains a nonsignatory to the Rome Statute, expressing concerns over jurisdictional sovereignty and potential misuse of the court's powers.
- **Advocacy and Criticism:** Various human rights organizations have urged India to reconsider its stance and join the ICC to strengthen international justice mechanisms.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Permanent Jurisdiction: Unlike ad hoc tribunals, the ICC is a permanent institution with a broad mandate to address various international crimes.
- **Complementary Role:** Serves as a court of last resort, intervening only when national courts are unable or unwilling to prosecute.
- Global Reach with Limitations: While aiming for universal justice, its jurisdiction is limited to member states or situations referred by the UN Security Council.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

Past UPSC Ouestions: The ICC has been a topic in international relations sections, with questions focusing on its role, jurisdiction, and India's position regarding the court.

• Key Facts to Remember:

- » **Establishment:** Founded by the Rome Statute in 1998; commenced operations in 2002.
- » Jurisdiction: Handles genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression.
- » **Membership:** 125 member countries; notable non-members include the USA, China, Russia, and India.
- » **India's Position:** Active participant in the Rome Statute negotiations but has not joined, citing concerns over sovereignty and potential political misuse.
- » **Recent Developments:** Issued arrest warrants for high-profile leaders; faced sanctions from non-member states like the USA.

Understanding the ICC's framework, jurisdiction, and the geopolitical dynamics surrounding its operations is crucial for topics related to international law and relations in the UPSC syllabus.

7.2 European Court of Human **Rights**

Name of the Organization

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

What it is (Nature and Function)

The ECHR is an international court established to oversee the enforcement of the European Convention on Human Rights. It adjudicates cases alleging violations of the civil and political rights set forth in the Convention by member states.

Year of Formation



The ECHR was established in 1959.

Why they formed it?

In the aftermath of World War II, European nations sought to prevent the recurrence of atrocities and protect human rights. This led to the drafting of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, and subsequently, the establishment of the ECHR to ensure adherence to the Convention.

Type

Intergovernmental organization

Status

Active

Headquarters

Strasbourg, France

Members

The ECHR comprises 46 member states, all of which are members of the Council of Europe.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to European countries committed to upholding human democracy, and the rule of law. Notably, the European Union is preparing to sign the European Convention on Human Rights, creating a common European legal space for over 700 million citizens.

India's Membership

No - India is not part of the Council of Europe, so it's not under the ECHR.

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Adjudication:** Hears applications from individuals or states alleging violations of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- **Interpretation:** Provides authoritative interpretations of the Convention's provisions.

Enforcement: Ensures that member states comply with its judgments, thereby upholding human rights standards across Europe.

Recent Activities

- Climate Change Litigation: In April 2024, the FCHR ruled in Verein KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz v. Switzerland that Switzerland's inadequate action on climate change violated human rights, marking significant precedent in environmental jurisprudence.
- Migration and Asylum: In January 2025, the Court found Greece guilty of systematically pushing back asylum seekers, ordering compensation for violations of human rights conventions.
- **Personal Autonomy:** In January 2025, the ECHR ruled in favor of a French woman who was penalized for refusing sexual relations with her husband, emphasizing the protection of bodily integrity and personal autonomy.

Recent News & Initiatives

- National **Debates:** Sovereignty Discussions have emerged in countries like the UK regarding the influence of the ECHR on domestic legal matters, particularly concerning deportations and immigration policies.
- Climate Change **Accountability:** The ECHR's landmark ruling against Switzerland in 2024 has spurred further climate-related cases, highlighting the Court's role in addressing environmental issues as human rights concerns.

India-Specific Developments

- **Non-Membership:** India is not a member of the Council of Europe and, consequently, not under the jurisdiction of the ECHR.
- **European Parliament Resolutions:** In July 2023, the European Parliament adopted a resolution expressing concern over human rights situations in India, particularly

regarding ethnic and religious violence. While this does not directly involve the ECHR, it reflects Europe's engagement with human rights issues in India.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Jurisdiction:** Regional Unlike International Court of Justice, which has a global mandate, the ECHR specifically addresses human rights issues within European member states.
- **Individual Access:** The ECHR allows individuals to directly file applications alleging human rights violations, a feature not commonly available in other international courts.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Ouestions: While direct questions on the ECHR are uncommon. understanding its role is pertinent for topics on international human rights mechanisms and India's foreign relations.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**
 - » **Establishment:** Founded in 1959 to enforce the European Convention on Human Rights.
 - » **Jurisdiction:** Covers 46 European countries, ensuring adherence to human rights standards.
 - » Significant Rulings: Has delivered landmark judgments influencing human rights law, including recent decisions on climate change and migration.
 - » India's Position: Not a member, but European human rights perspectives can impact international relations and policy discussions relevant to India.

Understanding the ECHR provides insights into the functioning of regional human rights courts and their influence on international law, which is valuable for topics in the UPSC syllabus related to global human rights frameworks and diplomatic relations.

7.3 Amnesty International

Name of the Organization

Amnesty International

What it is (Nature and Function)

Amnesty International is a global nongovernmental organization focused on human rights advocacy. It conducts research and generates action to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated.

Year of Formation

• Founded on May 28, 1961.

Why they formed it?

Amnesty International was established in response to the global need for a unified movement to protect individuals' rights. Its formation aimed to address and prevent violations of rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), especially focusing on freedom of speech, conscience, and protection against torture.

Type

• Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

Status

Active

Headquarters

London, United Kingdom

Members

• Amnesty International comprises global movement of more than 10 million people across over 150 countries and territories.

Who are its members?

Membership is open to individuals worldwide who support human rights advocacy. The organization prides itself



on being independent of any political ideology, economic interest, or religion, ensuring unbiased support for victims of human rights violations.

India's Membership

No - Not applicable. Amnesty is a nongovernmental advocacy organization, not a country-membership body. (India has an Amnesty chapter, but the nation isn't a "member.")

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Research and **Documentation:** Investigates and reports on human rights abuses globally.
- **Campaigning and Advocacy:** Mobilizes public opinion to exert pressure on governments and other entities to stop human rights violations.
- **Education and Awareness:** Provides human rights education to promote understanding and respect for human rights.
- **Lobbying:** Engages with policymakers to enact and enforce laws that protect human rights.

Recent Activities

- Global Human **Rights** Reporting: Continued to publish detailed reports on human rights situations in various countries, highlighting issues such as freedom of expression, unlawful detentions, and discrimination.
- **Advocacy in Conflict Zones:** Addressed human rights violations in conflict areas, including reporting on civilian impacts and calling for accountability.
- **Digital Rights and Privacy:** Investigated the human rights implications of digital surveillance and data privacy, emphasizing the need for regulations that protect individual rights.

Recent News & Initiatives

- **Environmental Racism in India:** In December 2024, Amnesty International highlighted the ongoing injustices faced by survivors of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, emphasizing the need for environmental justice and corporate accountability.
- **Automated Social Protection Systems:** In April 2024, the organization raised concerns about the human rights automated implications of social protection systems in India, particularly focusing on transparency and potential biases in welfare technologies.
- Targeted Demolitions in India: In February 2024, Amnesty International documented cases of unlawful force used during demolitions of Muslim properties in India, calling for an immediate halt to such practices.

India-Specific Developments

- **Operational Challenges:** In September 2020, Amnesty International ceased its operations in India after its bank accounts were frozen by the government, citing alleged financial irregularities. This action was viewed by many as a crackdown on human rights advocacy in the country.
- Human Rights Reporting: operational hurdles, Amnesty International has continued to report on human rights issues in India, including concerns over freedom of expression, treatment of religious minorities, and the use of technology in social welfare systems.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Grassroots **Mobilization: Amnesty** International's strength lies in its vast global membership, enabling widespread grassroots campaigns and advocacy.
- **Independence:** The organization maintains independence from political, economic, or religious affiliations, ensuring unbiased reporting and advocacy.
- **Comprehensive Scope:** While some organizations focus on specific rights or



regions, Amnesty International addresses a broad spectrum of human rights issues worldwide.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC **Questions:** Questions have been asked regarding the role of international NGOs in human rights advocacy, with specific references to organizations like Amnesty International.
- Key Facts to Remember:

» Founding Year: 1961

» Headquarters: London, UK

- » Global Presence: Over 10 million members in more than 150 countries.
- » Core Activities: Research, advocacy, education, and lobbying in human rights.
- » India Operations: Suspended in 2020 due to governmental actions; continues to monitor and report on India's human rights situation.

Understanding Amnesty International's role and challenges, especially in the context of India, is crucial for topics related to international human rights mechanisms and civil society's role in governance.

7.4 Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Name of the Organization

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

What it is (Nature and Function)

Human Rights Watch is an international non-governmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on human rights. It investigates and reports on abuses happening worldwide, aiming to hold perpetrators accountable and ensure justice for victims.

Year of Formation

Founded in 1978.

Why they formed it?

Initially established as Helsinki Watch, HRW was created to monitor the compliance of Soviet bloc countries with the Helsinki Accords. Over time, it expanded its focus to address human rights violations globally.

Type

• Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

Status

Active

Headquarters

• New York City, United States

Members

• HRW comprises over 250 staff members globally, including professionals such as journalists, lawyers, and academics.

Who are its members?

HRW's team is selected based on expertise in human rights, law, journalism, and related fields. The organization maintains independence by refusing government funding, relying instead on donations from private individuals and foundations.

India's Membership

No - Not applicable. HRW is an NGO; countries do not join it (it independently monitors human rights worldwide, including in India).

What it does (Key Objectives)

- **Research and Documentation: Conducts** on-the-ground investigations to document human rights abuses.
- **Public Awareness:** Advocacy and Publishes detailed reports to inform the public and influence policymakers.
- **Litigation and Legal Action:** Engages



in strategic litigation to hold violators accountable.

 Campaigns and **Partnerships:** Collaborates with local organizations to promote human rights reforms.

Recent Activities

- **Global Reporting:** Released World Reports summarizing human rights conditions in various countries.
- Thematic Focus: Addressed issues such as freedom of expression, women's rights, and abuses in conflict zones.
- Advocacy **Efforts:** Engaged international bodies to press for action against human rights violators.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Human Rights Concerns: In January 2025, HRW highlighted the failure of Western democracies to lead in human rights advocacy, citing crises in regions like Gaza and Sudan.
- Leadership Warnings: HRW's Executive Hassan, Director, Tirana expressed concerns in January 2025 about potential threats to freedoms with the possible return of leaders like Donald Trump.

India-Specific Developments

- Legislative Changes: In July 2024, the Indian government enacted new criminal laws, raising concerns about expanded police powers and potential impacts on freedoms of expression and fair trials.
- Minority Rights: HRW reported increased violence and harassment minorities in India, particularly following the 2024 elections.

Comparison with other Orgs

Independence: HRW maintains strict independence by not accepting government funding, allowing unbiased reporting.

- Comprehensive Reporting: Operates in over 100 countries, providing extensive coverage of human rights issues.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Works closely with local organizations to amplify impact and support grassroots movements.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: While direct questions on HRW are rare, understanding its role is crucial for topics on international human rights mechanisms and NGOs.
- **Key Facts to Remember:**

» Founding Year: 1978

» Headquarters: New York City, USA

» Scope: Operates in over 100 countries

» Funding: Does not accept government funds

» India Focus: Reports on issues like minority rights, freedom of expression, and legislative impacts on civil liberties.

Understanding HRW's operations findings provides valuable insights into global human rights challenges, essential for UPSC topics on international relations, human rights, and the role of NGOs.



8. Environmental and Climate Organizations

These organizations focus on protecting the environment, stopping pollution, and fighting climate change. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** leads global efforts to protect nature. The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** provides scientific reports on climate change. Groups like **IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)** and **WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)** work on saving forests, animals, and oceans. These organizations push countries to adopt clean energy, reduce carbon emissions,

and take care of the planet.

Environment and Climate PDF shall be released separately. It will cover all Environmetal related organisations and agreements. Join our telegram channel and visit our website to freely download the PDF.

9. Cultural and Identity-Based Organizations

These organizations bring together countries based on shared culture, language, or religion. The Commonwealth of Nations is a group of countries that were once ruled by the British Empire but still work together on trade and education. La Francophonie connects Frenchspeaking countries, while the **Arab League** unites Arabic-speaking nations. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) represents Muslimmajority countries and focuses on issues affecting the Islamic world. These organizations strengthen cultural ties and promote unity among similar nations.

Most of these organisations are already covered in other sections.



10. International Non-**Governmental and** Multi-Stakeholder **Organizations**

These are not controlled by governments but have a major influence on global issues. Groups like Greenpeace and WWF fight for environmental protection. Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) provides free medical aid in war zones and disaster-hit areas. World Economic Forum (WEF) brings business and political leaders together to discuss global challenges. These organizations rely on donations and volunteers and often work where governments cannot.

10.1 Transparency **International (TI)**

Name of the Organization

Transparency International (TI)

What it is (Nature and Function)

Transparency International is a global civil society organization dedicated to combating corruption and promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity across all sectors of society.

Year of Formation

• Founded in 1993.

Why they formed it?

Transparency International was established to address the pervasive issue of corruption worldwide. Recognizing corruption's detrimental impact on development, governance, and societal trust, the organization aimed to bring global attention to the problem and mobilize collective action against it.

Type

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

Status

Active

Headquarters

Berlin, Germany

Members

 Transparency International operates through a network of over 100 national chapters worldwide.

Who are its members?

Each national chapter is an independent entity focused on addressing corruption within its respective country. Membership criteria for these chapters include a commitment to Transparency International's mission and adherence to its guiding principles.

India's Membership

No – TI is an NGO; countries don't join TI. (India's status is as a country that TI evaluates for corruption index, not as a member.)

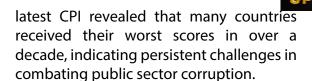
What it does (Key Objectives)

- Research and Analysis: Publishes the annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), assessing perceived levels of public sector corruption in countries worldwide.
- **Advocacy and Campaigning:** Engages in global and local campaigns to raise awareness about corruption and advocate for policy reforms.
- CapacityBuilding:Supportsgovernments, businesses, and civil society organizations in developing and implementing effective anti-corruption measures.
- Legal Assistance: Provides legal advice and support to victims and witnesses of corruption.

Recent Activities

Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: The

231



 Global Advocacy: Continued efforts to highlight the link between corruption and global challenges, such as climate change, emphasizing the need for transparent and accountable governance to address these issues effectively.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Global Corruption Concerns: The 2024 CPI highlighted that 47 out of 180 surveyed countries had their lowest scores, reflecting growing concerns about public sector corruption.
- Regional Highlights: The index noted significant declines in countries like the United States, France, and Germany, while countries such as South Sudan and Somalia remained at the bottom of the rankings.

India-Specific Developments

- Corruption Perceptions Index 2023: India scored 39 out of 100, ranking 93rd out of 180 countries, indicating ongoing challenges in addressing public sector corruption.
- Transparency International India: The national chapter has been active in raising awareness about corruption and advocating for greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Global Reach: With over 100 national chapters, Transparency International has a widespread presence, enabling it to address corruption issues on both global and local scales.
- Flagship Publications: The annual Corruption Perceptions Index is a widely recognized tool that provides a comparative assessment of corruption perceptions worldwide.

 Collaborative Approach: Works closely with governments, businesses, and civil society to develop and implement anticorruption strategies, fostering a multistakeholder approach.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

- Past UPSC Questions: The UPSC exam has previously included questions related to global anti-corruption measures and indices, such as the Corruption Perceptions Index.
- Key Facts to Remember:

» Founding Year: 1993

» Headquarters: Berlin, Germany

- » Global Presence: Over 100 national chapters worldwide
- » India's CPI 2023 Score: 39/100, ranking 93rd out of 180 countries
- » Core Activities: Research (e.g., Corruption Perceptions Index), advocacy, capacity building, and legal assistance

Understanding Transparency International's role and initiatives is crucial for topics related to governance, ethics, and international efforts to combat corruption, all of which are pertinent to the UPSC syllabus.

10.2 GAVI

Name of the Organization

• Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

What it is (Nature and Function)

Gavi is an international organization that brings together public and private sectors to improve access to vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

Year of Formation

Established in 2000.

Why they formed it?



In the late 1990s, immunization rates in developing countries were stagnating or declining, leaving millions of children vulnerable to preventable diseases. Gavi was created to address this gap by providing financial and technical support to strengthen health systems and make vaccines more affordable and accessible.

Type

• Public-private global health partnership.

Status

Active.

Headquarters

• Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

- Gavi operates through a broad alliance that includes:
 - » Governments of developing and donor countries.
 - » The World Health Organization (WHO).
 - » United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
 - » The World Bank.
 - » Vaccine manufacturers.
 - » Research and technical agencies.
 - » Civil society organizations.
 - » The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Who are its members?

Gavi's inclusive partnership model ensures collaboration across various sectors, leveraging the strengths of each member to achieve common immunization goals. Notably, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was a key founding partner, providing significant initial funding.

India's Membership

Yes - India is a major partner country of Gavi. It has had representation on the Gavi Board (e.g. India's Health Minister served

as a Gavi Board member for 2021–2023). (India both contributes to and receives *vaccine assistance from Gavi.)*

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Vaccine Financing and Provides funding and negotiates with manufacturers to make vaccines more affordable for low-income countries.
- **Health Systems Strengthening:** Offers technical assistance to improve healthcare delivery and infrastructure.
- Market Shaping: Works to influence vaccine markets to ensure sufficient supply and lower prices.
- **Innovative** Financing: Utilizes mechanisms like the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) to secure long-term funding.

Recent Activities

- COVID-19 Response: Co-led the COVAX initiative to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines globally.
- Malaria Vaccine Rollout: Supported the introduction of the world's first malaria vaccine in African countries.
- **Funding Challenges:** Faced financial constraints due to economic pressures on donor countries, leading to efforts in promoting "vaccine bonds" to secure necessary funds.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Funding Concerns: The UK government is poised to significantly cut its funding for Gavi, raising concerns about the potential impact on global vaccination efforts.
- **Mpox Vaccine Distribution:** Collaborated with the Canadian government to deliver 200,000 doses of mpox vaccine to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

India-Specific Developments

In the past two years, Gavi, the Vaccine



Alliance, has significantly strengthened collaboration with the Government of India to enhance immunization efforts and address challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

a. New Partnership to Protect Millions of Children

- Three-Year Strategic **Partnership** (2023-2026): In February 2023, Gavi and the Government of India launched a partnership aiming to reduce the number of "zero-dose" children—those who have not received any routine vaccines—by 30% by 2026.
- Financial Commitment: Gavi has pledged US\$ 250 million to support this initiative, focusing on:
 - » Identifying and vaccinating zero-dose children.
 - » Strengthening health systems.
 - » Introducing the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) into India's routine immunization schedule.
- **Targeted Interventions:** The partnership has identified 143 priority districts across 11 states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh, where immunization coverage is low. Tailored strategies are being implemented in these regions to ensure comprehensive vaccine coverage.

b. Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on **Immunization**

- Rise in Zero-Dose Children: The pandemic disrupted routine immunization services, increasing the number of zerodose children in India from 1.6 million in 2019 to 2.7 million in 2021.
- The Big Catch-Up Initiative: Launched during World Immunization Week in April 2023, this global effort aims to restore immunization progress lost during the pandemic. Gavi's Board has invested an initial US\$ 290 million to fund catch-up doses for children missed during this

period.

c. Leveraging Digital Health Innovations

eVIN and Co-WIN Platforms: India's Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN), developed in 2015 with Gavi's support, was adapted during the pandemic into the Co-WIN platform to manage COVID-19 vaccinations. This digital infrastructure has been pivotal in ensuring efficient vaccine distribution and is being highlighted in G20 dialogues to influence the global digital health agenda.

d. Financial **Contributions** and Sustainability

• Increased Domestic Funding: India has progressively increased its financial commitment to immunization programs, doubling its contribution to Gavi to US\$ 8 million for the 2018–2022 period. This reflects India's transition towards selffinancing and sustainable immunization efforts.

Comparison with other Orgs

- **Public-Private** Unlike Partnership: some organizations that are solely governmental non-governmental, or Gavi's model integrates both sectors for a comprehensive approach.
- **Innovative Financing:** Employs unique funding mechanisms like vaccine bonds through IFFIm, setting it apart from traditional funding models.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

UPSC Relevance: **Topics** related to global health initiatives, publicprivate partnerships, and international organizations are pertinent to the General Studies papers, particularly GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Science and Technology).

Key Facts:

» Gavi was established in 2000 to improve vaccine access in low-income countries.





- » It operates from Geneva, Switzerland.
- » India has been both a beneficiary and a donor, contributing US\$8 million for 2018-2022.
- » Gavi co-leads the COVAX initiative for equitable COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Understanding Gavi's role provides insights into global health governance, the impact of public-private partnerships, and India's engagement in international health initiatives key areas for the UPSC examination.

10.3 International Olympic **Committee (IOC)**

Name of the Organization

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

What it is (Nature and Function)

IOC is an international, governmental organization that serves as the supreme authority of the Olympic Movement. It oversees the organization of the modern Olympic Games and promotes Olympism worldwide.

Year of Formation

1894

Why they formed it?

The IOC was established to revive the ancient Olympic Games, aiming to foster international cooperation, peace, and the promotion of physical education through organized sports competitions.

Type

International Organization Non-Governmental

Status

Active

Headquarters

Lausanne, Switzerland

Members

As of 2025, the IOC comprises 109 active members and 39 honorary members. Membership includes individuals representing various countries, selected for their contributions to sport and Olympism.

Who are its members?

Members are elected by the IOC Session and are considered representatives of the IOC in their respective countries, not delegates of their countries within the IOC.

India's Membership

No – Nations are not direct members of the IOC (National Olympic Committees send athletes; IOC members are individuals). (India's National Olympic Committee is recognized by the IOC, but India as a country is not an IOC "member state.")

What it does (Key Objectives)

- Organizing the Olympic Oversees the selection of host cities and ensures the successful staging of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games.
- **Promoting Olympism:** Encourages the practice of sport to promote physical and mental well-being, education, and international understanding.
- **Supporting Athletes:** Provides financial and educational resources to athletes worldwide.
- Ensuring Fair Play: Implements antidoping measures and upholds the integrity of sport.

Recent Activities

2030 and 2034 Winter Olympics Host **Selection:** In July 2024, the IOC awarded the 2030 Winter Olympics to the French Alps and the 2034 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City, Utah.



- Inaugural Olympic Esports Games: Announced in 2024, the first Olympic Esports Games are scheduled for 2027 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- **Leadership Transition:** Current IOC President Thomas Bach is set to conclude his term in 2025, with elections for a new president scheduled for March 2025.

Recent News & Initiatives

- Olympism365 Initiative: Launched to drive social change through cross-sector collaborative funding, aiming to make sport more accessible and inclusive.
- **Policy on Gender Eligibility:** The IOC is poised to implement policies ensuring that only biological women compete in women's sports categories, addressing ongoing debates about fairness in female competitions.

India-Specific Developments

- **Recognition of Indian Athletes:** In August 2024, Indian Olympic shooter Abhinav Bindra was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order for his contributions to sport.
- Youth Olympic Games Participation: India continues to actively participate in Youth Olympic events, fostering young talent and promoting sports at the grassroots level.

Comparison with other Orgs

- Global Reach: Unlike other international sports organizations that focus on specific sports, the IOC encompasses multiple disciplines, making it a unifying body for global sports.
- Olympic Solidarity: The IOC provides financial assistance to National Olympic Committees worldwide, promoting the development of sport universally.

Relevance to UPSC Exam

UPSC Relevance: The IOC's role in

international sports governance, its initiatives promoting global peace and cooperation, and India's participation in the Olympics are pertinent topics for the General Studies papers, especially GS-II (International Relations) and GS-III (Sports and Development).

Key Facts:

- » The IOC was founded in 1894 to revive the Olympic Games.
- » Headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- » India has been an active participant in the Olympic Movement, with athletes achieving significant milestones.

Understanding the IOC's structure, functions, and recent initiatives provides insights into global sports governance and India's role in the international sports arena, essential for comprehensive UPSC exam preparation.