



United Nations

Prior to the establishment of the United Nations, the League of Nations existed as the premier organisation for international cooperation. Established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations was established to ensure international peace, security and cooperation between nations following the First World War. At its height, the League of Nations had 58 members. In the 1930s, its success waned as the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) gained influence, eventually leading to the start of World War II in 1939.

Founding of the United Nations

The name "United Nations," coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was first used in the "Declaration by United Nations" of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis powers.

The UN was founded following the Second World War, in 1945 in San Francisco, California. The Charter is the constituting instrument of the UN, setting out the rights and obligations of member states, and establishing the United Nations organs and procedures. 50 nations and several non-governmental organisations attended and signed the Charter, committing to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights.

The UN officially came into existence on October 24, 1945 after ratification of the Charter. The day is now celebrated each year around the world as United Nations Day.

The United Nations Today

Today, almost every fully recognised independent state is a member state of the UN, with membership currently totalling 193 countries.

The work of the UN reaches every corner of the globe. Although best known for peacekeeping, peace building, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, there are many other ways the United Nations and its system (specialised agencies, funds and programmes) affect our lives and make the world a better place.

The UN works on a broad range of issues, from sustainable development, environment and refugees protection, disaster relief, counter terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, to promoting democracy, human rights, gender equality and the advancement of women, governance, economic and social development and international health, clearing landmines, expanding food production, and more, in order to achieve its goals and coordinate efforts for a safer world for this and future generations.

Answer the following questions.

When was the League of Nations established?

What was the aim of League of Nations ?

How many countries were members of the League of Nations?

Why did it start to fail?

Answer the following questions.

When and why was the name United Nations first used?

When was the United Nations established?

What is the charter and what is outlined in it? Quote the terms from the text.

When did The UN officially came into existence?

How many countries are now members of the United Nations?

Cite some of the issues that it works on.