

# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UN

PREPARED BY  
PROF. THOMAS GM  
Associate professor  
POMPEI COLLEGE AIKALA

# INTRODUCTION

- ◉ Today UN is more important than ever.
- ◉ It is important not only to the people of the world but also to all the States of the world.
- ◉ It is the only place where the world can come together to pool strengths and share burdens from the last 65 years.
- ◉ Though some of its institutional machinery needs to be reformed yet by many measures, the UN is an extra ordinary success.
- ◉ It is an indispensable mechanism for ending colonialism and helping to manage the transition of many States to independence.

# SIGNIFICANCE CONTD...

- ◉ It has become the centre of global efforts to tackle complex transnational problems in such areas as health, the environment, chronic poverty and deprivation etc.
- ◉ It has played a significant role to promote Human Rights.
- ◉ The UN provides a place for dialogue, deliberation and diplomacy.
- ◉ It is the only global arena where nations can in peace air grievances, confront opponents, craft solutions and marshal resources that inevitably require the help of each others.

# 1. MAINTAINING PEACE & SECURITY:

- ◉ It has deployed 42 peace keeping operations as of Sept. 1996.
- ◉ Through these peace keeping missions it has saved millions of people from becoming casualties of conflict.
- ◉ At present there are 16 active peace keeping forces in operation.
- ◉ Since 1945 it has been credited with 172 peaceful settlements that have ended regional conflicts.
- ◉ It put an end to Iran -Iraq war, withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi invasion.
- ◉ It has used Quiet diplomacy to avert imminent wars.

## 2. PROMOTING DEMOCRACY:

- It has enabled the people in over 45 countries to participate in free & fair elections, including Cambodia, Namibia, El-Salvador, Eritrea, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Africa, so on.
- It has provided electoral advice, assistance & monitoring of results.

### 3. PROMOTING DEVELOPMENTS:

- ◉ It has given more attention & resources to the promotion of the development of human skills & potentials.
- ◉ For this the UN spends \$10 billion annually.
- ◉ UNDP in cooperation with 170 member states implements projects for agriculture, industry, education and environments.
- ◉ It supports more than 5000 projects with a budget of \$1.3 billions.
- ◉ UNICEF spends more than \$800 million a year primarily on immunization, health care, nutrition & basic education in 138 countries.

## 4. PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS:

- ◉ The UN Human Rights Commission has focused world attention on cases of torture, disappearance, arbitrary detentions & has generated IN pressure to be brought on governments to improve their Human Rights records.

## 5. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT:

- ◉ It has played a vital role in designing a global programme to protect the environment.
- ◉ The “Earth-Summit” the UN conference on environment and development held in Rio-de- Janeiro, in 1992 resulted in biodiversity & climate change, and all countries adopted Agenda-21, a blue-print to promote sustainable development or the concept of economic growth while protecting natural resources.

## 6. PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION:

- The UN through the IAEA has helped to minimise the threat of nuclear war by inspecting the nuclear reactors in 90 countries to ensure that the nuclear materials are not diverted for military purposes.

## 7. STRENGTHENING IN LAW:

- Over 300 IN treaties on varied topics such as human rights, to the use of outer sea bed have been enacted through the efforts of the UN.

## 8. JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF MAJOR IN DISPUTES:

- On disputes relating to territorial issues, diplomatic relations, hostage taking, right of asylum, rights of passage and economic rights, etc.

# 10. ENDING APARTHEID IN S. AFRICA:

- ◉ UN was a major factor in bringing down the apartheid system.
- ◉ UN called it as a crime against humanity.
- ◉ Elections were held in April, 1994 in which all S. Africans were allowed to participate on an equal basis followed by the establishment of a majority government.

# 10. PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE VICTIMS OF CONFLICT:

- ◉ More than 30 million refugees have received aid from the UN.
- ◉ Now, there are more than 19 million refugees, mostly women & children who are receiving food, shelter, medical aid, education & repatriation assistance.

# 11. ERADICATING SMALL POX:

- A 13 year long project of the WHO resulted in the complete eradication of small pox from the planet in 1980.
- It was able to wipe polio from the Western Hemisphere with global eradication expected by the year 2000.

## 12. PRESSING FOR UNIVERSAL IMMUNIZATION:

- It is working towards universal immunization on Polio, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, tuberculosis.
- It is saving the lives of 3 million children every year.

# 13. PROMOTING INVESTMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:

- ◉ It alleviates chronic hunger and rural poverty in developing countries.
- ◉ It provides safe drinking water to 1.3 billion people in rural areas during the last decade.
- ◉ It promotes women's rights.
- ◉ Orienting economic policy toward social need.
- ◉ It helped in promoting self determinations in the case of a number of countries.

# 14. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT:

- It took measures to protect the ozone layer, curbing global warming, cleaning up pollution, reducing the effects of the natural disasters, clearing landmines, preventing over fishing, limiting deforestation & promoting sustainable forestry development, protecting consumer health, etc.