

Global Citizenship and the UN System

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League of Nations

- WWI 1914-1918
- May 1916, President Wilson declared that the United States was willing to become a partner in any association of nations formed to check aggression.
- January 1917, President Wilson addressed the American Senate on a “World League for Peace.” He proposed a Fourteen Points plan for an equitable peace in Europe.
- When the United States entered the war (Feb 1917), President Wilson insisted in his war message that peace in future can never be maintained except by a world-wide partnership of democratic nations.
- “The League of Nations Society” was set up in 1915 and “The League of Free Nations Associations” was started in 1918. Later on both the Associations were amalgamated into, the “League of Nations Union.”
- 28 June 1919: The Covenant of the League of Nations was signed as Part I of the Treaty of Versailles, and it became effective together with the rest of the Treaty on 10 January 1920.
- US never joined the League.

Membership

Original members

Those states and dominions who had signed the Treaty of Peace and who were invited to accede to the Covenant and actually did so before 20 March 1920.

Non Original members

The main organs

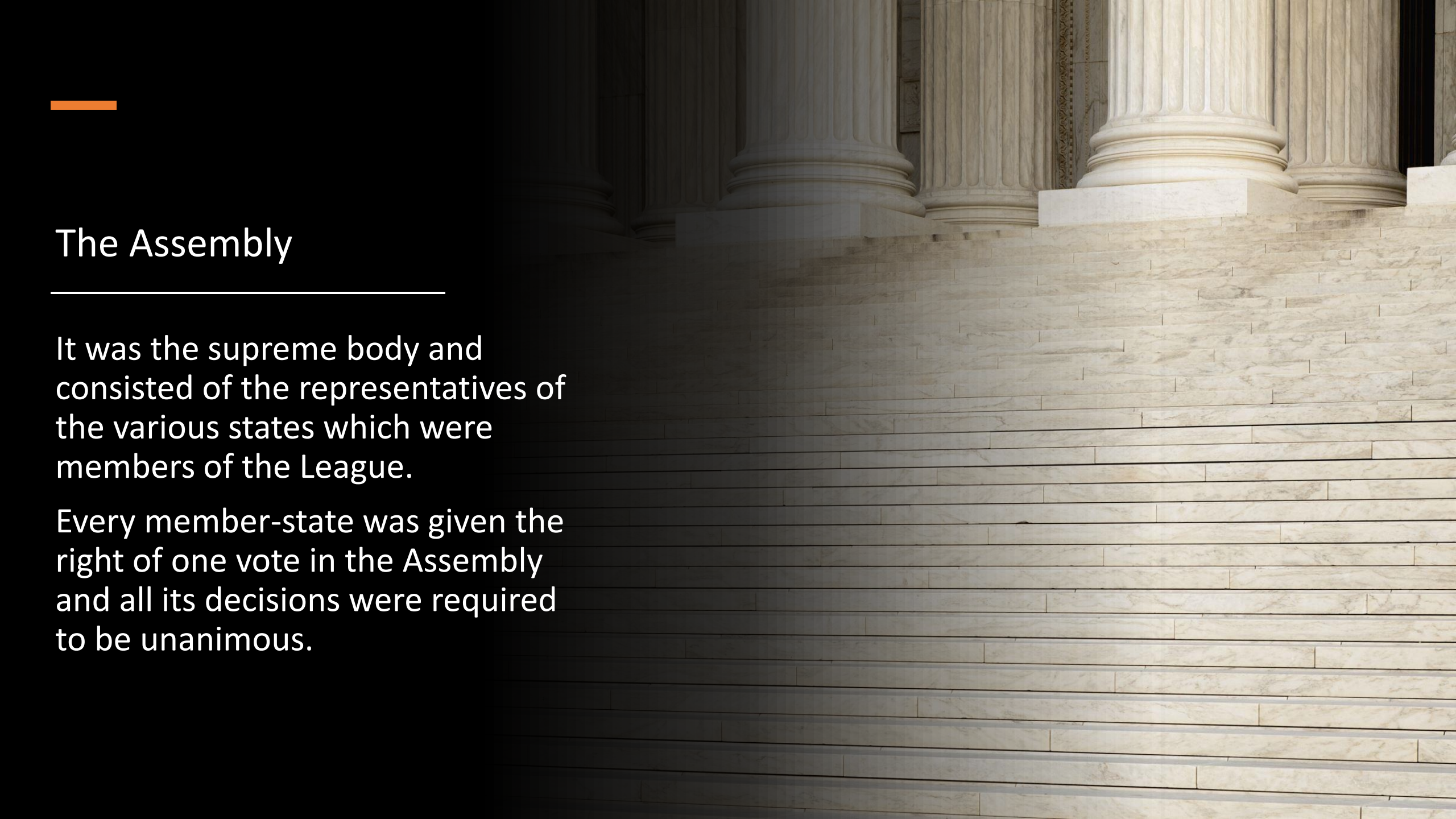
The Assembly

the Council

the Secretariat



of the League of Nations, Geneva, 1936



The Assembly

It was the supreme body and consisted of the representatives of the various states which were members of the League.

Every member-state was given the right of one vote in the Assembly and all its decisions were required to be unanimous.

The Council

- Executive of the League and it consisted of permanent members, non-permanent members and ad hoc representatives.
- Only the Great Powers were the permanent members of the Council but additional permanent members could be admitted with the approval of the Assembly and the Council. There were as many as eleven non-permanent members of the Council.
- The Council was to meet at least once a year.
- It was required to deal with any matter within the sphere of the action of the League or affecting the peace of the world.
- It was required to formulate plans for the reduction of armaments by the various states.
- It was required to suggest ways and means to avoid the evil effects of the manufacture of munitions and implements of war by private enterprises.

The Secretariat

It consisted of the Secretary-General who was appointed by the Council with the approval of the Assembly.





The Permanent Court of International Justice

It was opened on 15 February 1922 and it continued to work till October 1945.

Its Judges were elected by the Council and the Assembly and the League of Nations had no power to remove them.

The budget of the Court was under the control of the Assembly.

The jurisdiction of the Court comprised all cases which the parties referred to it and all matters specifically provided for in the Treaties and Conventions in force.



**International
Labour
Organization**

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- It was also attached to the League of Nations.
 - Its object was to improve the labour conditions in various parts of the world.
 - Its governing body consisted of the representatives of the governments, employers and workers.
 - Important decisions were taken on the occasion of its annual meetings.

Sanctions

Provision was made for collective action against a state which dared to violate the provisions of the Covenant of the League.

Coercive action could be taken against the rebellious states.

Provision was also made for the enforcement of economic sanctions against an aggressor country.

Causes of failure

- The Covenant of the League was made a part and parcel of the peace settlement. Many states considered the Treaty of Versailles as a treaty of revenge and were not prepared to ratify the same.
- The absence of the great Powers from the international organisation weakened it.
- The rise of dictatorship in Italy, Japan and Germany weakened the chances of success of the League. Japan, Germany and Italy left the League.
- The League was dominated by England and France.
- The states continued to be the members of the League so long as their national interests were not in any way endangered or sacrificed.

Causes of failure

- The League failed because it was based on the principle of equality. The idea of one nation, one vote led to Liberia being as important as the United Kingdom or France or the Soviet Union.
- The League though conceived as universal was in fact never universal.
- If the nations of the world were not prepared to sacrifice their national interests for the sake of the League or world interests.
- The League of Nations failed to maintain peace and the Second World War broke out in 1939.

United Nations declaration or the Washington declaration

- II World War 1939-1945
- On 1 January, 1942, representatives of 26 Allied countries met in Washington and signed a Declaration of United Nations. The signatories endorsed the principles of the Atlantic Charter (1941)
- The UN Charter finally emerged after three major conferences:
 1. the Dumbarton Oaks Conference (1944)
 2. the Yalta Conference (1945)
 3. and the San Francisco Conference (1945)
- At the Dumbarton Oaks Conference the representatives of four major powers (Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and China) agreed on proposals for the aims, structure and functioning of the United Nations.

The General Assembly

It is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN.

All **193 Member States of the UN** are represented in the **General Assembly**, making it the only UN body with universal representation.

Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and general debate, which many heads of state attend and address.

Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly.

Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.

The General Assembly, each year, elects a GA President to serve a one-year term of office.

The Security Council

- It has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- It has 15 Members: (5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members). Each Member has one vote.
- Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions.
- The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement.

In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorise the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

- The Security Council has a Presidency, which rotates, and changes, every month.

Security Council's members

Five permanent members

China

France

Russian Federation

United Kingdom

United States

Ten non-permanent members

- Albania (2023)
- Brazil (2023)
- Gabon (2023)
- Ghana (2023)
- India (2022)
- Ireland (2022)
- Kenya (2022)
- Mexico (2022)
- Norway (2022)
- United Arab Emirates (2023)

Economic and Social Council

- It is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals.
- It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies.
- It has 54 Members, elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.
- It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Trusteeship Council

- It was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under Chapter XIII, to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence.
- By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence.
- The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994.
- By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994, the Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required -- by its decision or the decision of its President, or at the request of a majority of its members or the General Assembly or the Security Council.

International Court of Justice

It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

Its seat is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands).

The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States

and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.



Secretariat

- It comprises the Secretary-General and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal bodies.

Committees

- Counter-Terrorism Committee
- Non-Proliferation Committee
- United Nations Military Staff Committee
- Sanctions Committees

Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Bodies

- United Nations Compensation Commission
- Working Group established pursuant to resolution 1566 (2004)
- Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations
- Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict
- The Security Council Working Group pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005) violations against children affected by armed conflict.
- Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

International Courts and Tribunals

The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (“Mechanism”) was established pursuant to resolution 1966 (2010) of 22 December 2010 by the Security Council

It is mandated to continue a number of essential functions previously carried out by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (“ICTR”) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (“ICTY”), subject to the provisions of the same resolution and the Statute of the Mechanism.

Human Rights Council

- It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system.
- It is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year.
- It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.
- 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly.

UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council



- Fifty-eight abstained from the process.
- Russia, China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Vietnam, were among those who voted against.
- Those abstaining, included India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia.

Special Procedures and investigative bodies

17 Special Procedures and investigative bodies - and created seven new mandates in 2021-2022:

an accountability project on Sri Lanka

a monitoring mission in Belarus

a Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Israel

a Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan

a racial justice body addressing systemic racism in law enforcement around the globe

a Special Rapporteur on climate change

an investigative body for Ethiopia

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Unique process which involves a review of the HR records of all UN Member States.

The UPR is a State-driven process which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations.

The Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group held three sessions resulting in reviewing human rights situations in 41 states per session.

It held several thematic forums, panels and seminars between regular and special sessions.

Key Questions

- *What role has the UN played constructing a Global Citizenship?*
- *Have global citizens shaped the UN?*
- *Is the UN system appropriate mechanism for facing global problems?*
- *What are the main challenges in achieving the UN purposes of peace worldwide?*