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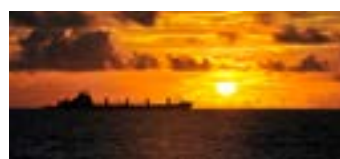
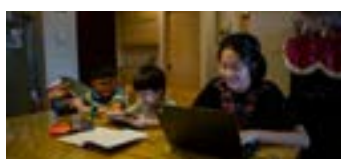
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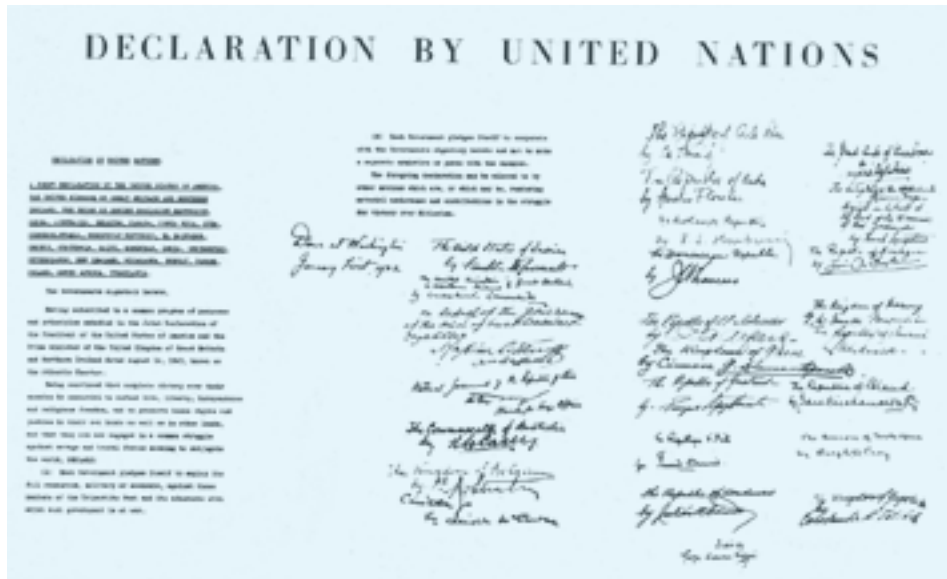
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# BUILDING THE FUTURE: STEPPING STONES IN UNITED NATIONS HISTORY



## INTRODUCTION



Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has come to hold an incontestable place in global imagination and in driving collective action among its Member States.

Receptive to the say of every nation in its fold and to the voice of civil society, the United Nations, brick by brick, builds consensus. It resolves or mitigates seemingly unyielding national differences and advances higher standards in health, education and human rights, and limits the spread of weapons of war. It accompanies nations it has helped decolonize in their journey of independence and growth.

Guided by science, the United Nations sounded the early warning on climate change and led nations to counter this elemental threat. In the face of the rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has worsened inequities,

the United Nations has responded to save lives and societies. It has advocated for a post-pandemic world founded on fair globalization, healthy ecosystems and increased opportunities especially for women and youth.

The timeline presented here showcases some significant moments in United Nations history in meeting the wide-ranging, ever-evolving challenges of our world. Each entry in the timeline is a symbolic stepping stone marking the path of the United Nations through the decades in protecting and improving lives.

Achievements in United Nations history are regularly preceded by all-too-often unnoticed chapters of diplomacy, public service, hard work and quiet cooperation. Towards completing the picture of such stories, the timeline entries explain why and how a decision or action was taken, who participated and who was affected.

Click the highlighted text in an entry to access further narrative from the *Yearbook of the United Nations*—the peerless and authoritative reference of the Organization—and engage in the diplomatic prudence and consensus building, intense negotiations and resulting policy—the mise en scène of multilateralism—at work in significant United Nations decisions and actions. Supplementary photos, graphics and multimedia, where tagged onto an entry, provide for a closer appreciation of the intricate landscape of international relations.

Developed by the *Yearbook of the United Nations* team of analysts and communications specialists, this timeline represents a singular record of how manifold efforts undertaken through the United Nations have helped us rise above individual and national interests in history-making moments of solidarity, empathy and friendship.



■ 1 January 1942

## DECLARATION BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Representatives of 26 Allied nations fighting against the Axis powers meet during the Second World War in Washington, D.C. to pledge their support for the Atlantic Charter by signing the “[Declaration by United Nations](#)”. This document contains the first official use of the term “United Nations”.



*The “Declaration by United Nations”, signed by 26 Allied nations, pledged “to employ its full resources, military or economic” in “the struggle for victory over Hitlerism”. The term “United Nations” was suggested by United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (seated, second from left). | 1 JANUARY 1942/UN PHOTO/VH*

■ 1–22 July 1944

## UNITED NATIONS MONETARY AND FINANCIAL CONFERENCE, BRETTON WOODS

Forty-four nations attend the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire (United States), where they agree on a post-war international monetary system and establish the [International Monetary Fund](#) and the [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) (World Bank) to foster international economic cooperation and reconstruction. Two years of exploratory discussions among the monetary and financial experts of the United Nations had preceded the formal meeting at Bretton Woods.



*Prior to the formation of the United Nations in June 1945, several meetings and events helped set the stage for the creation of the new international organization. Participants at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference discussing monetary stabilization as an aid to post-war trade. 1 JULY 1944/UN PHOTO*

■ 26 June/ 24 October 1945

## UN CHARTER IS SIGNED AND RATIFIED

Delegates from [50 nations](#) meet in San Francisco (United States) from 25 April to 26 June for the United Nations Conference on International Organization, where they draft, unanimously adopt and sign the 111-article Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations officially comes into existence on [24 October when the Charter is ratified](#) by the five permanent members of the Security Council and by a majority (24) of the other signatories. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year.



*A view of two of the signature pages of the United Nations Charter. | 26 JUNE 1945/UN PHOTO/ROSENBERG*

■ 24 January 1946

### FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

As a deliberative, overseeing, reviewing and criticizing organ, the United Nations General Assembly has been called the “town-meeting of the world” and “the open conscience of humanity”. By unanimous vote, the Assembly adopts its first resolution, which [establishes the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission](#) to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy.



The first session of the General Assembly opened on 10 January 1946 at Central Hall, Westminster, London. Here, a view of the crowds outside Central Hall at the opening session of the General Assembly. UN PHOTO/MARCEL BOLOMEY

■ 1 February 1946

### FIRST SECRETARY-GENERAL TRYGVE LIE (NORWAY)

[Trygve Lie of Norway](#) is appointed the first Secretary-General of the United Nations by the General Assembly. Mr. Lie serves as Secretary-General from 2 February 1946 to 10 April 1952.



Trygve Lie of Norway addressing the General Assembly following his formal appointment as the first Secretary-General of the United Nations. 2 FEBRUARY 1946/UN PHOTO/ MARCEL BOLOMEY

■ 12 February 1946

### INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION IS CREATED

The General Assembly approves the [creation of the International Refugee Organization \(IRO\)](#) to deal with the massive number of refugees created by the Second World War. IRO took on many of the functions carried out by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration ([UNRRA](#)), [a specialized agency that ended operations on 30 June 1947.](#)



Refugees from IRO camps in Germany, Austria and Italy boarding an IRO-chartered ship at Bremerhaven, Germany, for the United States. IRO, one of the UN specialized agencies, ended its operations on 31 January 1951, after a 55-month resettlement program that aided some 1,600,000 displaced persons. | 1 JANUARY 1951/UN PHOTO

■ 21 June 1946

### UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IS ESTABLISHED

The United Nations Economic and Social Council *establishes the Commission on the Status of Women* to serve as the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.



*Participants celebrate at the conclusion of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which resulted in a commitment by Member States to safeguard and improve women's and girls' access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, ensuring that their design and delivery is transformed to prevent discrimination and create a level playing field for women and girls. | 22 MARCH 2019/ UN PHOTO/RYAN BROWN*

■ 11 December 1946

### UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND IS ESTABLISHED

The General Assembly unanimously *establishes the International Children's Emergency Fund* to provide emergency food and health care to children, adolescents and mothers in countries devastated by the Second World War. The aid is distributed without discrimination due to race, creed, nationality, status or political belief.



*Children in Athens, Greece, receiving breakfast in a school provided by a joint project of the United Nations Children's Fund—then called the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund—and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. 1 JUNE 1948/UN PHOTO*

■ 14 December 1946

### SEVENTY-FOUR TRUST TERRITORIES ARE IDENTIFIED

As administering powers, eight UN Member States—Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States—identify between them *74 Non-Self-Governing Territories* to which *Chapter XI of the UN Charter* applies. Under Chapter XI, the administering powers accept the obligation to assist the inhabitants of those territories in the progressive development of their own free political institutions.



*As at 31 January 2022, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, as listed in this map, remain on the agenda of the Committee on Decolonization, or the C-24. Member States which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of such Territories are called administering Powers.*



February–March 1947/25 February 1948

## UN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS FOR EUROPE, ASIA AND THE FAR EAST, AND LATIN AMERICA ARE ESTABLISHED

The United Nations Economic and Social Council establishes the [Economic Commission for Europe](#) and the [Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East](#) to aid post-war reconstruction and promote human development in those regions, which hold their first sessions in June and May 1947. A year later, on 25 February 1948, a regional [Economic Commission for Latin America](#) is also established. The latter two commissions were subsequently renamed and are known, respectively as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.



The Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific has sponsored activities as part of a regional “training of trainers” course on the promotion of suitable environments for persons with disabilities. Several disabled persons testing out a park in Bangkok designed to be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. Among its features, the park has Braille blocks on the ground to guide persons who are visually impaired and railings for wheelchairs. | 9 MARCH 2000/UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

7 April 1948

## WHO IS ESTABLISHED

The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) is established with the objective that all people should enjoy the highest attainable standard of health, and under guiding principles on health as a human right, health as fundamental to peace and security, the basic importance of healthy child development, and the common danger of unequal development among countries in health and in disease control, especially communicable disease.



Founded by WHO and partners in 2020, the COVAX initiative for equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines, as at April 2021, had enabled millions of doses of the vaccine to be distributed to almost 100 participating countries around the world. Vaccine equity is key to ending the pandemic. UNICEF/RAGUL KRISHNAN

May 1948

## INAUGURAL OBSERVER UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION

In 1948, the Security Council [instructs the United Nations Mediator in Palestine to supervise the ceasefire in Palestine](#) between Arab and Israeli forces following the First Arab-Israeli war; the Security Council also decides to provide military observers. The next year the [United Nations Truce Supervision Organization](#) is established.



Peacekeepers' role is based on the trust of local people. United Nations Truce Supervision Organization officers talk with local boys in Jerusalem. | 1 DECEMBER 1990/UN PHOTO/JOHN ISAAC

■ 9 December 1948

**FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY: CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE**

The General Assembly unanimously adopts its first human rights treaty, the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#), which defines genocide in legal terms and urges countries to prevent and punish actions of genocide in war and in peacetime. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 152 States parties.



*In the main courtroom of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge (Communist Party of Kampuchea) leader, Kaing Guek Eav is sentenced to a 35-year jail term, commuted to 19 years. An estimated 1.7 million Cambodians were killed from 1975 to 1979 in the “Killing Fields” revolution. | 26 JULY 2010/UN PHOTO/EXTRAORDINARY CHAMBERS IN THE COURTS OF CAMBODIA*

■ 10 December 1948

**UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The General Assembly adopts the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). The Declaration affirms, for the first time in human history, that all persons, without any distinction or discrimination, are entitled to basic human rights, and lays the foundation for a comprehensive body of human rights law. It has helped to ensure that billions of people live safer, longer and more dignified lives. In 2021, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that 80% of United Nations Member States had ratified at least four core international human rights treaties and all Member States had ratified at least one.



*The Declaration was adopted to advance social progress and standards of life for all. As the COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone—including the young and the old, those with disabilities, those detained and LGBTI people—human rights must guide the response.*

■ 8 December 1949

**UNRWA IS ESTABLISHED**

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East \(UNRWA\)](#) is established by the General Assembly to prevent conditions of starvation and distress among 750,000 Palestine refugees and to further conditions of peace and stability. As at 31 December 2021, UNRWA was assisting some 5.7 million Palestine refugees, contributing to their welfare and human development under a mandate extending until 30 June 2023.

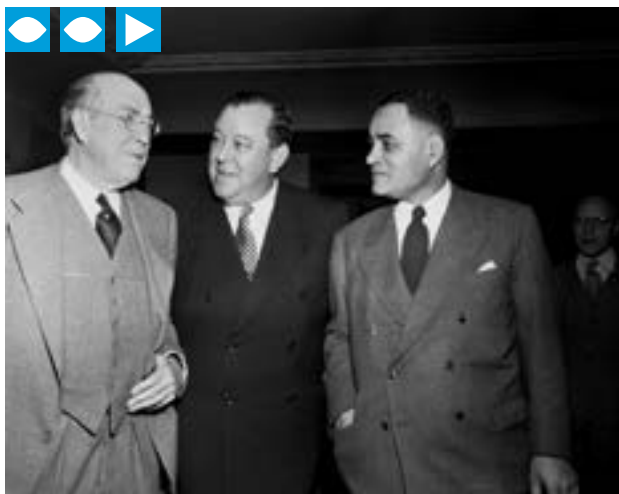


*Refugees receiving training in the auto-mechanics workshop of the Vocational Training Centre in Wadi Seer. UNRWA efforts to assist Palestine refugees to become self-supporting are focused on vocational training. | 1 JANUARY 1961/UN PHOTO/PB*

■ 10 December 1950

## NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO UN MEDIATOR RALPH BUNCHE

Ralph Bunche, UN mediator in Palestine, is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for helping bring a ceasefire to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948-1949. He is the first African American and person of colour to be so honoured with the prize.



Ralph Bunche (right) meets with Secretary-General Trygve Lie (centre) and Stanton Griffis, Director of UN Relief for Palestine Refugees, on the day he returned to UN Headquarters and reported that his mission as Palestine Mediator was complete. 18 APRIL 1949/UN PHOTO/MB

■ 1 January 1951

## UNHCR IS ESTABLISHED

In the face of the continuing refugee crisis following the Second World War, the General Assembly in December 1949 establishes the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 1 January 1951, as a vehicle for addressing global refugee crises and adopts resolution 428 (V) on the Statute of the Office on 14 December 1950.



Cambodians returning from refugee camps aboard a UNHCR train. | 28 AUGUST 1992/UN PHOTO/PERNACA SUDHAKARAN

■ 25 July 1951

## CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES (REFUGEE CONVENTION)

The UN Refugee Convention is adopted by the UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries and enters into force in 1954. The Convention forms the basis of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and outlines the rights of displaced persons as well as the obligations of States to protect them, critically through the principle of non-refoulement, or the non-return of a refugee to the country of origin where he or she has a well-founded fear of facing persecution. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 146 States parties.



Attending the International Conference on 40 Years of Hosting Afghan Refugees in Pakistan, Secretary-General António Guterres (third from right) meets with three generations of refugees from Afghanistan, Yemen and Tajikistan in Islamabad. Pakistan is the world's second largest refugee-hosting country. 16 FEBRUARY 2020/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN



20 December 1952

### CONVENTION ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN IS ADOPTED

The UN [Convention on the Political Rights of Women](#) is adopted by the General Assembly and comes into force on 7 July 1954. It is the first international treaty in which ratifying States commit to the protection of the political rights of their citizens while equalizing the status of men and women. The Convention states that women are entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men without discrimination, eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies and entitled to hold public office and exercise all public functions without any discrimination. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 123 States parties.



Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf—the first woman elected head of state of an African country—exiting the Centennial Pavilion in central Monrovia following her confirmation as President of Liberia. She serves from 2006 to 2018. 23 NOVEMBER 2005/UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN

7 April 1953

### SECOND SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD (SWEDEN)

Following the resignation of Trygve Lie, [Dag Hammarskjöld](#) is appointed the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. He serves from 10 April 1953 to 18 September 1961, when his second term of office is tragically cut short when he [died in a plane crash](#) in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) while on a mission in the service of the United Nations. He was on his way to a meeting with Moise Tshombe, president of the Katanga Province, to negotiate a cease-fire between United Nations Operation in the Congo forces and Katangese troops under Mr. Tshombe.

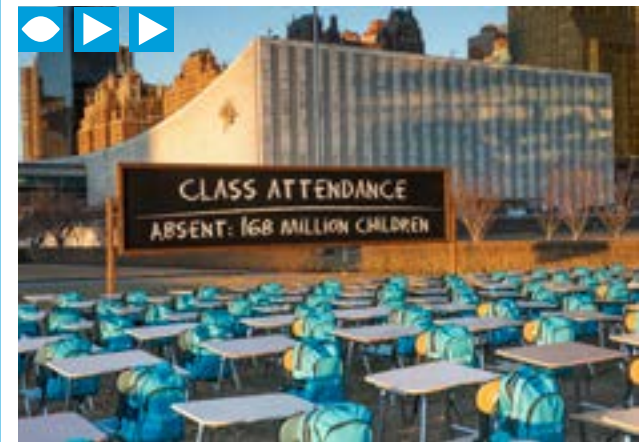


Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (left) meets with Chou En-Lai, Premier of the People's Republic of China. The Secretary-General travelled to Beijing to seek the release of fifteen United Nations Command personnel detained by China following the Korean War, including eleven United States airmen sentenced to imprisonment. Hammarskjöld premised the visit on his 'Peking Formula', through which he acted in his independent role as Secretary-General under the UN Charter. Four of the prisoners were released in May 1955, while the eleven airmen were released in August 1955. 10 JANUARY 1955/UN PHOTO

6 October 1953

### UNICEF MANDATE IS PERMANENTLY RENEWED

The General Assembly decides to [renew permanently the mandate of UNICEF](#) to address the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries everywhere. The words “international” and “emergency” are dropped from the organization’s name, although it retains the original acronym “UNICEF”.



A view of the UNICEF ‘Pandemic Classroom’ at UN Headquarters in New York, which calls attention to the education emergency wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic and raises awareness of the need for governments to keep schools open. The installation comprised 168 empty desks, each seat representing one million children living in countries where schools had been almost entirely closed since the onset of lockdowns. | 2 MARCH 2021/ UNICEF/UN0423851/CHRIS FARBER

■ 10 December 1954

### NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO UNHCR

The UN refugee agency, [Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#), is awarded the first of its two Nobel Peace Prizes “for its efforts to heal the wounds of war by providing help and protection to refugees all over the world.”



A group of boys at a Syrian refugee camp in the Beqaa Valley of eastern Lebanon waiting to greet Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his visit there. 25 MARCH 2016/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

■ 5 November 1956

### FIRST ARMED UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION

The [First Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly](#) meets to discuss the Suez Canal Crisis and decides to establish the first armed UN peacekeeping operation, the [United Nations Emergency Force \(UNEF\)](#) in order to secure the Suez Canal area and supervise the cessation of hostilities there.



Indian soldiers serving with UNEF in one of the three companies of the First Parachute Battalion (PUNJAB) and stationed along the Demarcation Line, return to their camp after six hours duty on the Line from 6a.m. to 12 noon. Ten nations provided contingents for the UNEF force (Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, India, Indonesia, Norway, Sweden, Yugoslavia). | 6 JANUARY 1958/UN PHOTO/H.

■ 29 July 1957

### IAEA IS ESTABLISHED

The [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) is established in response to the deep fears and expectations generated by the discoveries and diverse uses of nuclear technology. The Agency's genesis is U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's “Atoms for Peace” address to the UN General Assembly on 8 December 1953.



Members of the International Atomic Energy Agency Fact-Finding Mission in Japan, comprising experts from 12 nations, visiting Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant to assess tsunami damage and study nuclear safety lessons that could be learned from the accident that took place there on 11 March 2011. | 27 MAY 2011/UN PHOTO/IAEA/ GREGG WEBB

**29 April 1958****ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA IS ESTABLISHED**

The United Nations Economic and Social Council [establishes the Economic Commission for Africa](#) (ECA) as one of the regional commissions of the United Nations. ECA works with partners and Member States towards sustainable development in Africa. In 2016, ECA and the African Union issue a joint progress report on the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063—the strategic development blueprint of the continent—and the integrated measurement framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all UN Member States.



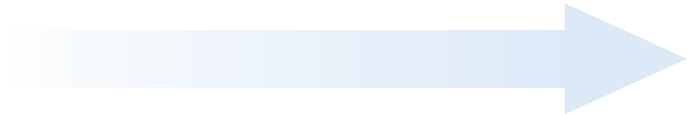
Sound engineer John Haberman working during the first session of the Economic Commission for Africa, which opened in the parliament building in Addis Ababa on 29 December 1958. The Commission, the fourth of its kind established by the United Nations, provides a focal point where the economic needs of the African people can be expressed and where action to meet those needs can be initiated and stimulated. | 1 JANUARY 1959/UN PHOTO/SB

**13 December 1958****FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON OUTER SPACE**

Recognizing the common interest of humankind in outer space and [seeking to answer questions](#) on how outer space can benefit the peoples of Earth, the General Assembly adopts its first [resolution related to outer space, resolution 1348 \(XIII\)](#) entitled “Question of the Peaceful Use of Outer Space”.



Soviet cosmonauts Yuri Gagarin and Valentina Tereshkova, the first man and woman in outer space, giving a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York. Ms. Tereshkova, whose flight took place on 16 June 1963, remains the youngest and only woman to have flown a solo space mission. 16 OCTOBER 1963/UN PHOTO/YUTAKA NAGATA





■ 1 April 1960

### FIRST SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON APARTHEID

The Security Council, in its first action on South Africa, adopts [resolution 134\(1960\)](#) deploring the policies and actions of the Government of South Africa in the wake of the police killing of 69 peaceful African protesters in Sharpeville on 21 March. The Council calls upon the South African government to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination.



The elimination of the system of legalized racial discrimination known as apartheid was a UN concern from the beginning. The United Nations took the lead in the global anti-apartheid struggle, pointedly through the suspension of South Africa from the General Assembly in 1974 and the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council in 1977. Pictured here is a racially segregated beach near Cape Town, South Africa. Apartheid formally ended in 1994 with the formation of a democratic South African Government led by Nelson Mandela.  
1 JANUARY 1982/UN PHOTO

■ September–October 1960

### BIGGEST INCREASE IN UN MEMBERSHIP IN ANY ONE YEAR

[Seventeen newly independent States](#)—16 from Africa—join the United Nations. It is the biggest increase in UN membership in any one year, and as the year concludes, the General Assembly adopts the [Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples](#), stating that political, economic, social or educational inadequacy should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.



As one of its first acts, on 20 September 1960, the fifteenth regular session of the General Assembly unanimously admitted 13 African States and Cyprus to membership in the United Nations, bringing the total number of UN Member States to 96 and almost doubling its original membership. The heads of two of the newly admitted delegations of African States—M. Stephane Tchichelle (standing, right), Vice-president of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of the Congo and M. Charles Okala (seated, right), Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon—are greeting each other in the Assembly Hall.  
20 SEPTEMBER 1960/UN PHOTO/MILTON GRANT

■ 3 November 1961

### THIRD SECRETARY-GENERAL U THANT (BURMA)

Following his nomination by the General Assembly to complete the unexpired term of the late Dag Hammarskjöld, [U Thant is appointed Acting Secretary-General](#) of the United Nations on 3 November 1961 before his unanimous appointment to [a full term](#) on 30 November 1962. He serves as Secretary-General until 31 December 1971.



Secretary-General U Thant (left) receives credentials from Javier Perez de Cuellar (right), then the new Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations. It was the final year of U Thant's second term at the helm of the Organization. Mr. Perez de Cuellar would eventually become the fifth Secretary-General, serving from 1982 to 1991.  
22 FEBRUARY 1971/UN PHOTO/TEDDY CHEN

■ 10 December 1961

### NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS POSTHUMOUSLY AWARDED TO SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld is awarded the 1961 Nobel Peace Prize posthumously “for developing the United Nations into an effective and constructive international organization, capable of giving life to the principles and aims expressed in the UN Charter.” In 1997, the Security Council establishes the “[Dag Hammarskjöld Medal](#)” in a tribute to those who have lost their life in the course of service in UN peacekeeping operations.



Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, photographed in his private apartment on the 38th floor of the Secretariat building, standing in front of “[Woman Combing Her Hair](#),” a painting by Fernand Leger, lent to the United Nations by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

1 MARCH 1954/UN PHOTO/MB

■ 19 December 1961

### WFP IS ESTABLISHED

The General Assembly establishes, on an experimental basis, the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP). While ensuring that commercial markets, trade and agricultural economies in recipient countries are not disrupted, WFP is tasked with meeting emergency food needs on a worldwide basis—including in situations of chronic malnutrition—and with conducting school feedings and pilot projects using food as an aid to development.



With the support of WFP, Timor-Leste’s Ministry of Education launched a nationwide initiative to provide schoolchildren from pre-school to grade 9 with mid-morning meals to encourage enrolment and attendance as well as increase students’ learning capacity. | 5 FEBRUARY 2010/UN PHOTO/MARTINE PERRET

■ 2 April/7 August 1963

### UN SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGAINST APARTHEID/SOUTH AFRICA ARMS EMBARGO

The United Nations Special [Committee](#) on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, which will lead UN efforts to end the apartheid system of racial segregation in the country for the next 30 years, [meets for the first time](#) on 2 April 1963. In August, the [Security Council adopts resolution 181](#)(1963) calling on all States to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa. The arms embargo becomes mandatory on 4 November 1977.



The Special Committee on Apartheid arrived in Dublin on 18 May 1974 to begin its two-week special session in Europe, to promote wider public attention to UN action against apartheid and to consult with Governments, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations on further action. Pictured is the Special Committee on Apartheid as it met with the Executive Committee of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement. | 20 MAY 1974/UN PHOTO

■ 31 August 1965

### SECURITY COUNCIL NON-PERMANENT SEATS INCREASE FROM SIX TO TEN

The number of non-permanent seats on the Security Council **increases from six to ten following an amendment to Article 23 of the UN Charter**, to reflect the increase in UN membership and to improve representation of the African and Asian regions.



*The General Assembly met in Conference Room Four and elected Argentina, Bulgaria, Japan, Mali, New Zealand, Nigeria and Uganda as non-permanent members of the Security Council for terms beginning on 1 January 1966. Assembly President Amintore Fanfani is making a statement. At the table with him are: Secretary-General U Thant (left); and C. V. Narasimhan (right), Under-Secretary for General Assembly Affairs and Chef de Cabinet. In the back row are: Jose Rolz-Bennett (left), Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs and Leo Malania, Chief Editor, Office of the Secretary General.*  
10 DECEMBER 1965/UN PHOTO/TEDDY CHEN

■ 10 December 1965

### NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO UNICEF

Nineteen years after its founding, the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize** for "fulfilling the condition of Nobel's will, the promotion of brotherhood among the nations" and emerging on the world stage as "a peace-factor of great importance."

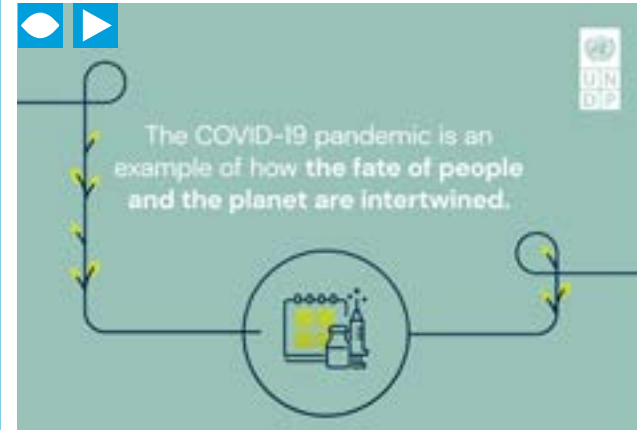


*Children participating in the 2017 Universal Children's Day celebration at UN Headquarters in New York hold signs calling for peace. UNICEF invited children from around the world to "take over" key roles in the media, politics, business, sport and entertainment to voice their support for millions of their peers who are unschooled, unprotected and uprooted.*  
20 NOVEMBER 2017/UN PHOTO/MANUEL ELIAS

■ 10 January 1966

### UNDP IS ESTABLISHED

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is established by the General Assembly and mandated to partner with governments worldwide in eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and exclusion, and building resilience so countries can sustain progress. The 1960s is a decade of rapid decolonization, with a growing number of countries gaining independence and joining the United Nations, and issues of development come to the attention of the international community.



*UNDP issues an annual Human Development Report.*



10 October 1967

### FIRST SPACE TREATY (OUTER SPACE TREATY) ENTERS INTO FORCE

As space exploration—a new area of human endeavour—continues to expand, the UN Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, [enters into force](#). [The Treaty was adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1966](#).



The *Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines)* were adopted by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 2019. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs promotes space sustainability and aims to showcase how the LTS Guidelines materialize in practice through a multi-stakeholder approach.

12 June 1968

### APPROVAL OF THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

The General Assembly approves the [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons \(NPT\)](#), which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology and promotes the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The NPT is the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. It [enters into force in 1970](#). The lingering suffering of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb survivors is an impetus to eliminate nuclear arms.



Secretary-General António Guterres (left) meets with atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha) in Nagasaki, Japan. 8 AUGUST 2018/UN PHOTO/DANIEL POWELL

3 December 1968

### AGREEMENT ON THE RESCUE OF ASTRONAUTS, THE RETURN OF ASTRONAUTS AND THE RETURN OF OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE

The [UN Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects launched into Outer Space](#) enters into force. The Agreement elaborates on elements of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and obliges States to take all possible steps to rescue and help astronauts in distress and promptly return them to the launching State, and, upon request, to provide assistance in recovering space objects that return to Earth outside the territory of the launching State.



The Soyuz MS-12 spacecraft is pictured docked to the International Space Station's Rassvet module as the orbital complex flies 256 miles above the Aegean Sea. This view looks from northeast to southwest, from Greece, Italy and across the Mediterranean Sea to Libya. 25 APRIL 2019/NASA PHOTO

■ 4 January 1969

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), adopted and opened for signature and ratification by the General Assembly on 21 December 1965, [enters into force](#). As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 182 States parties.



*The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery (25 March) and the Transatlantic Slave Trade honours those who endured the atrocities committed by slave traders and owners, and condoned by slavery’s beneficiaries, for over 400 years.*

■ 26 May 1969

**FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND UN SURVEY ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

In response to mounting concerns of the General Assembly about the rapid decline of the human environment due to pollution, erosion, waste and biocides—accelerated by explosive population growth and urbanization—the Secretary-General is requested to submit a first-of-its kind [survey on global environmental issues](#). His report in May 1969 on [Problems of the Human Environment](#) warns that “if current trends continue, life on Earth could be endangered.”



*Apartment buildings in the southern section of Athens, Greece. Among the main issues identified by the Secretary-General’s 1969 report on “Problems of the human environment” were those of human settlements. Accompanying explosive global population growth had been the spread of urbanization and the accelerated impact of industrialization and advanced technology that was often poorly integrated with human needs and environmental necessities. Some of the most severe environmental problems have occurred in cities. | 1 JANUARY 1980/UN PHOTO*

■ 10 December 1969

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO ILO**

The Nobel Peace Prize for 1969 is awarded to the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) “for creating international legislation ensuring certain norms for working conditions in every country.” The ILO was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. In 1946, it became a UN specialized agency. In 2019, ILO adopted a Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.



*Henri Laugier, Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Social Affairs (left), receiving the message of approval on behalf of Secretary-General Trygve Lie on the UN/ILO draft agreement. Jan Stanczyk, Director-General of the Department, is reading the message of Edward J. Phelan, Director of ILO, sent over direct teleprinter from Montreal, Canada, to UN Headquarters, at Lake Success, New York. 2 OCTOBER 1946/UN PHOTO*

■ 9–17 July 1970

### INAUGURAL WORLD YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Young people from all over the world gather at [UN Headquarters in New York for the World Youth Assembly](#), the first international youth convocation organized by the United Nations. Over 11 days, 646 participants nominated by their countries or selected by student and youth organizations use the UN platform to discuss global issues important to them, such as education, peace, development and the environment. The success of the event serves as a basis for future World Youth Assemblies.



Malala Yousafzai, the young education rights campaigner from Pakistan, speaking at the “Malala Day” United Nations Youth Assembly. The event, taking place on Malala’s sixteenth birthday, brings together hundreds of students from over 80 countries to call for quality education for every girl and boy in the world. | 7 DECEMBER 2013/ UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNAS

■ 22 December 1971

### FOURTH SECRETARY-GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM (AUSTRIA)

The General Assembly appoints Kurt Waldheim as [Secretary-General](#) of the United Nations. He serves two terms from 1 January 1972 to 31 December 1981.



Kurt Waldheim, representative of Austria, seated at his desk in the General Assembly Hall. Prior to his appointment as Secretary-General, he served as the Permanent Observer for Austria to the United Nations in 1955 and as the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations from 1964 to 1968 and from October 1970 to December 1971. 15 DECEMBER 1955/UN PHOTO

■ 5–16 June 1972

### FIRST UN ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE AND CREATION OF UNEP

Convinced of the need for urgent action at all levels to limit and, where possible, stop ongoing and worsening damage to the environment, and convinced also that such action is essential for development, the [United Nations convenes its first Environment Conference in Stockholm, Sweden](#), which leads to the [establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#), headquartered in Nairobi.



Thousands of citizens and organizations from around the world are raising their voice to join [#GenerationRestoration](#). They tell how they are growing trees, greening cities, rewilding gardens, changing diets and cleaning up rivers and coasts.



■ 9 August 1973

### ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA IS ESTABLISHED

The Economic and Social Council establishes the [Economic Commission for Western Asia](#) as the fifth UN regional economic commission. Its purpose is to stimulate economic activity in western Asian member countries, strengthen regional cooperation and promote development. It is later renamed the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.



Mervat Tallawy (left), Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, is a guest on *World Chronicle*, speaking on the theme “Middle East: Economic Development”. Tony Jenkins (second from right), President of the United Nations Correspondents Association, hosts the event. | 25 OCTOBER 2004/UN PHOTO/KY CHUN

■ 30 November 1973

### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SUPPRESSION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF APARTHEID

The [International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid](#) is approved by the General Assembly by its resolution 3068 (XXVIII). The Convention, enters into force on 18 July 1976. As at 15 December 2021, it has 110 States parties.



A voter casting her ballot in a polling station in Edendale Township in Pietermaritz in the first non-racial elections held in South Africa. | 1 APRIL 1994, UN PHOTO/CHRIS SATTLBERGER

■ 19 June–2 July 1975

### FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

International Women’s Year—declared in 1972 by the General Assembly to intensify action on gender equality and women’s integration into efforts for development and inter-State cooperation—is marked by the [first World Conference on Women](#), held in Mexico City. The World Conference produces a [World Plan of Action](#) to implement the objectives of the International Women’s Year and for the advancement of women through 1985.



Stamps designed by Joachim Rieß that were issued from the German Democratic Republic for the 1975 International Women’s Year.

■ 3 January 1976

**INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* is adopted by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966. Nine years later, it *enters into force* and constitutes one of the core human rights instruments of the United Nations. As at 15 December 2021, the Covenant has 171 States parties.

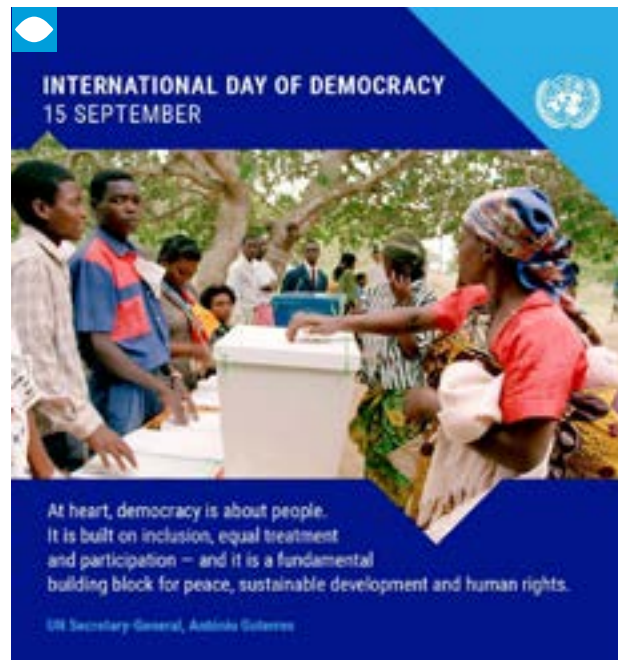


Obligations related to clean air are implicit in the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. The *International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies* (7 September) emphasizes the health and environmental impacts of air pollution.

■ 23 March 1976

**INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* is adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1966. More than nine years later, it *enters into force* as one of the core UN human rights instruments. As at 15 December 2021, the Covenant has 173 States parties.



Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country” and “The will of the people shall be the basis of government authority”.

■ 23 May–30 June 1978

**FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT**

The *General Assembly* convenes, for the first time, a *Special Session on Disarmament*. With 145 nations in attendance, it is the first time since the *Disarmament Conference* of 1932 that a majority of countries in the world meet to discuss all aspects of disarmament. The *Special Session* decides on a programme of action and conducts a review of the international machinery for disarmament negotiations.



Aerial view of thousands of demonstrators filing past UN Headquarters in New York on their way to a Peace Rally in Central Park, which was timed to coincide with the *General Assembly’s* second *Special Session on Disarmament*. An estimated 750,000 people gathered in support of world nuclear disarmament, making it the largest demonstration of its kind ever to take place in the United States. 12 JUNE 1982/UN PHOTO/YUTAKA NAGATA

■ September 1978

### FIRST LIST OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), working to protect sites in danger since the 1950s, publishes, as [approved by the World Heritage Committee](#), its first list of world heritage sites—six natural and six cultural sites across four continents. The sites deserve special protection due to their outstanding universal value under the [1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage](#). As at January 2022, UNESCO lists some 1,154 historic monuments and natural treasures worldwide.



Afghan boys play football near where one of the Buddhas of Bamiyan once stood. Subsequent to the 2001 destruction by the Taliban of the two giant standing Buddha statues, UNESCO in 2003 simultaneously inscribed the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley onto the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger.

28 MAY 2009/UN PHOTO/FARDIN WAEZI

■ 12–23 February 1979

### FIRST WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE

Convened by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the [First World Climate Conference](#) calls on nations to foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate that might hurt the well-being of humanity. The Conference endorses the establishment of the WMO World Climate Programme—to promote studies of climate variability and change and their implications—and leads to the 1988 [creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#).



Africa's remaining glaciers are of great scientific importance in the study of the impact of climate change. They are expected to melt entirely by the 2040s—a sign of imminent and irreversible change to the Earth. [World Meteorological Day](#) is observed each year on 23 March.

■ 18 December 1979

### CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

The [General Assembly](#) adopts the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW), covering political, economic, social, cultural and civic rights. It [enters into force](#) on 3 September 1981. As the most comprehensive international instrument to protect the human rights of women, CEDAW defines the meaning of discrimination against women, and countries that have ratified or acceded to it are legally bound to put it in practice. In March 2021, UN partner, the Inter-Parliamentary Union announces that the proportion of women parliamentarians worldwide reached 25.5% in 2020—a historic first. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 189 States parties.



Women parliamentarians of the Afghan Lower House (Wolesi Jirga or “House of the People”) arrive at their inauguration ceremony in Kabul. It was Afghanistan’s second parliamentary inauguration since 2001. Women made up 69 of the 249 candidates who were elected to the Afghan parliament on 18 September 2010.

26 JANUARY 2011/UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN



**8 May 1980****SMALLPOX IS DECLARED ERADICATED**

Three years after the last case was reported, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially **declares smallpox eradicated**. The disease had existed for at least 3,000 years and was one of the world's most feared diseases. Its eradication is achieved through a **collaborative global vaccination programme** led by WHO (1967–1980), which involved over 500 million vaccinations. In 2020, WHO reports that 85% of the world's children are vaccinated and protected from debilitating diseases.



*Inoculation against smallpox of the entire populations of Incheon and Seoul was moving towards completion by the end of October 1950. Korean civilians could obtain their rice ration only upon presentation of an inoculation certificate, guaranteeing that no one would be missed in the immunization drive. Mass inoculations were also in progress against typhus, typhoid and cholera. | OCTOBER 1950/UN PHOTO*

**10 December 1981****NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO UNHCR FOR THE SECOND TIME**

The **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize for the second time**, “for promoting the fundamental rights of refugees.” The 1 million Swedish kronor (\$184,162) attached to the Prize is used to establish a trust fund for disabled refugees.



*A refugee from Afghanistan carries his young disabled son out of an inflatable boat after crossing the Aegean sea from Turkey to Mithimna, Skala Sikamineas, Greece. Thousands of refugees and migrants mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan make this crossing towards the Greek islands, and continue their trip towards the Balkans and Central Europe. 5 OCTOBER 2015/UNHCR PHOTO/ACHILLEAS ZAVALLIS*

**15 December 1981****FIFTH SECRETARY-GENERAL JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR (PERU)**

The **General Assembly** appoints **Javier Pérez de Cuéllar** as **Secretary-General** of the United Nations. He serves two terms as Secretary-General from 1 January 1982 to 31 December 1991.



*Portrait of Javier Perez de Cuellar.*  
16 DECEMBER 1981/UN PHOTO/BACKRACH

■ 10 December 1982

**CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA**

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is signed by 117 States and two entities—the largest number of signatures ever affixed to a treaty on its first day. The Convention sets forth an innovative legal code for ocean navigation, resource exploitation, environmental protection and scientific research, including establishment of freedom-of-navigation rights, territorial sea boundaries at 12 miles offshore and exclusive State economic zones at up to 200 miles. It enters into force on 16 November 1994. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 168 States parties.

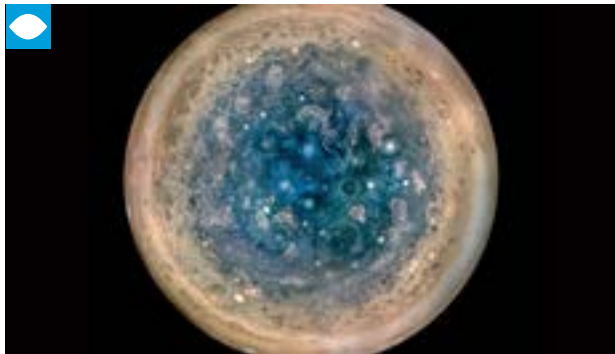


The sun rises over ships anchored off of Mogadishu, Somalia, waiting to offload their cargo. The local port was experiencing an unprecedented flurry of activity and traffic after nearly twenty years of civil war.  
30 OCTOBER 2012/UN PHOTO/TOBIN JONES

■ 11 July 1984

**UN AGREEMENT GOVERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF STATES ON THE MOON AND OTHER CELESTIAL BODIES ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The UN Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies enters into force. It reaffirms and elaborates on many of the provisions of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty as applied to the Moon and other celestial bodies, and affirms that those bodies should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, that their environments should not be disrupted, and that the United Nations should be informed of the location and purpose of any station established on those bodies.



Jupiter's south pole, as seen by NASA's Juno spacecraft from an altitude of 52,000 kilometres. The oval features are cyclones, up to 1,000 kilometres in diameter. Juno launched on 5 August 2011 and entered Jupiter's orbit on 4 July 2016.  
25 MAY 2017/NASA/JPL-CALTECH/SWRI/MSSS/BETSY ASHER HALL/GERVASIO ROBLES

■ 10 December 1984

**CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE IS ADOPTED**

The General Assembly adopts the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It enters into force on 26 June 1987. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 173 States parties.

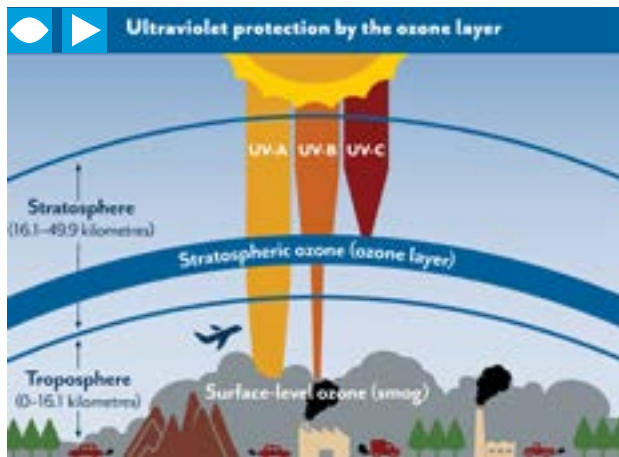


A view inside the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the site of the Khmer Rouge Security Prison S-21, where torture was routinely practiced.  
28 OCTOBER 2010/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

■ 16 September 1987

### MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON SUBSTANCES THAT DEplete THE OZONE LAYER

All UN Member States [adopt the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#), a global agreement regulating the production and consumption of nearly 100 human-made chemicals referred to as ozone-depleting substances. The Protocol [enters into force](#) on 1 January 1989, and later achieves universal ratification with 198 States parties. Between 1986 and 2019, ozone depleting emissions decreased by 99%.



The three types of ultraviolet (UV) radiation are classified according to their wavelength. Short-wavelength UV-C, the most damaging type, is absorbed by the ozone layer. Most medium-wavelength UV-B is filtered by the atmosphere and cannot penetrate beyond the superficial skin layers. Relatively long-wavelength UV-A is responsible for the immediate tanning effect, contributes to skin ageing and wrinkling, and may enhance the development of skin cancers.

■ 22 September 1988

### VIENNA CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE OZONE LAYER

The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer [enters into force](#). By enabling States to exchange information on the effects of human activities on the ozone layer, the [Convention provides a framework](#) for international cooperation to combat those activities responsible for ozone depletion. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 198 States parties.



In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 16 September the [International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer](#), commemorating the date of the signing, in 1987, of the [Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer \(resolution 49/114\)](#).

■ 9-11 November 1988

### UN INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE IS LAUNCHED

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) [launch the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) with the objective of providing governments at all levels with scientific information they can use to develop climate policies.



An exhibit of a melting ice bridge made of frozen Antarctic water by the renowned Norwegian artist Vebjørn Sand, displayed at UN Headquarters, serves as a reminder of the devastating effects of global warming and the melting of the world's ice in areas like Antarctica, the Arctic and Greenland. The ocean absorbs about 90 percent of excess heat trapped by greenhouse gases and is being hit hard by climate change. 17 DECEMBER 2007/UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN



■ 10 December 1988

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES**

United Nations Peacekeeping Forces are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for having, “under extremely difficult conditions, contributed to reducing tensions where an armistice has been negotiated, but a peace treaty has yet to be established.”



A memorial service is held on the logistics base of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in Mavivi for a fallen peacekeeper from its Indonesian military engineers company, who died after an ambush by an armed group while returning from a road construction site in Kilya.  
27 JUNE 2020/UN PHOTO/MICHAEL ALI

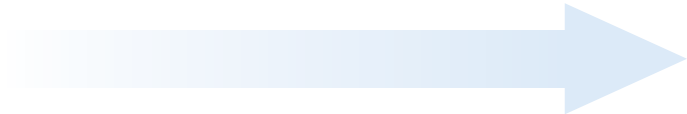
■ 20 November 1989

**CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IS ADOPTED**

The General Assembly adopts the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international human rights treaty that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention enters into force on 2 September 1990 and later becomes the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 196 States parties.



The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 19) states that children should be protected from all forms of violence. The *Global Partnership to End Violence against Children*, made up of over 500 partners, including governments, UN agencies, research institutions and non-governmental organizations, is the only global initiative focused solely on Sustainable Development Goal 16.2: ending all forms of violence against children.



■ July 1990

**IPCC FIRST ASSESSMENT REPORT: CLIMATE CHANGE IS A CHALLENGE WITH GLOBAL CONSEQUENCES**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN body for assessing climate science, releases its [First Assessment Report](#) underlining that climate change has global consequences requiring international cooperation. The report serves as a scientific basis for the creation in 1992 of a framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle climate change.



▶▶ 3.

**Phase out fossil fuel subsidies**



Phase out fossil fuel subsidies is one of four steps to reach Net-Zero emissions; gas emissions and reductions are equal. The other three are: stop building coal plants; put a price on carbon; and finance the green economy.

■ 3 December 1991

**SIXTH SECRETARY-GENERAL BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI (EGYPT)**

Boutros Boutros-Ghali is appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations by the General Assembly, after recommendation by the Security Council. He serves from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1996.



Portrait of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his office. 11 DECEMBER 1996/UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

■ 31 January 1992

**FIRST-EVER SECURITY COUNCIL SUMMIT IS HELD**

The first-ever Security Council Summit, with Heads of State and Government from all 15 members in attendance, is held in New York. The Council gathers for this one-day Summit to take stock of the post-cold war world. Subsequently, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issues *An Agenda for Peace*, which outlines a UN response to violent conflict through preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.



A general view of the chamber of the Security Council at its first summit-level meeting held with 13 Heads of State and Government and two Foreign Ministers representing the members of the Council. Members issued a declaration committing their Governments to measures to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction and invited Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to make recommendations on ways to strengthen UN capacity in preventative diplomacy, for peacemaking and peacekeeping. | 31 JANUARY 1992/ UN PHOTO/MILTON GRANT

■ 3–14 June 1992

### EARTH SUMMIT, RIO DE JANEIRO

The [UN Conference on Environment and Development](#), the “Earth Summit”, is held in Rio de Janeiro and attended by leaders from over 100 countries. This intergovernmental gathering, the largest in history at the time, results in [Agenda 21](#)—a plan of action for sustainable development—and the opening of three multilateral treaties for signature: the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), the [Convention to Combat Desertification](#) and the [Framework Convention on Climate Change](#).

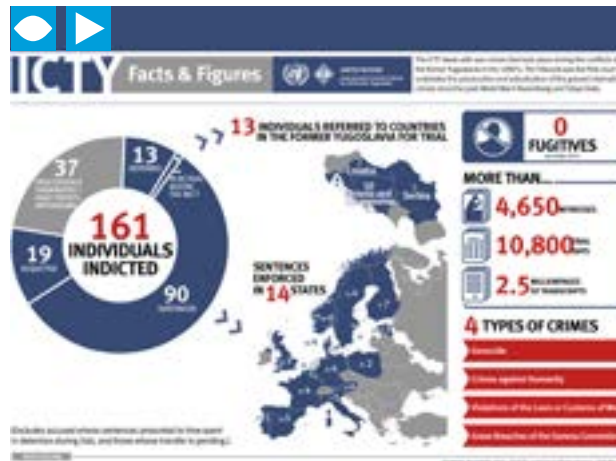


In the Brazilian province of Pará, an employee of the Tapajós National Forest shows the effects of illegal logging in a government-protected area. The 1992 Biodiversity Convention aims to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. | 28 JULY 2007/ UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

■ 25 May 1993

### FIRST UN WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL

The [International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia \(ICTY\)](#) is established by Security Council resolution 827(1993) to prosecute those suspected of executing mass atrocities in the Balkans. It is the first international war crimes court set up by the United Nations and the first since the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals were established at the end of the Second World War. Following the formal closure of ICTY in December 2017, the [International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals](#), established by Security Council resolution 1966(2010), assumes responsibility for its residual functions.



ICTY was inaugurated and held its first session at the Peace Palace in The Hague on 17 November 1993.

■ 20 December 1993

### DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The General Assembly adopts the [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), the first international instrument to explicitly address and define violence against women as any gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm—occurring in public or in private life—and to lay out a framework for action globally.



On [International Women's Day](#), participants march from the centre of Monrovia (Liberia) to the Temple of Justice, home of the Liberian Supreme Court, and stage a peaceful sit-in protesting gender-based violence. The Secretary-General's [UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women](#) campaign aims to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls around the world. | 8 MARCH 2007/UN PHOTO/ERIC KANALSTEIN



December 1993

**OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS DIVISION IS RENAMED UN OFFICE FOR OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS AND RELOCATES TO VIENNA**

The expert unit created within the UN Secretariat in 1958 to assist the *ad hoc* [Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#) transforms in 1968 into the Outer Space Affairs Division and is [strengthened in 1982](#) following UNISPACE II. During 1992, the International Space Year, it is renamed the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs and [relocates to Vienna in 1993](#). In 2020, the register of objects and satellites launched into outer space, which the Office maintains, reaches record numbers.



*Pictured is the deployment of the NanoRacks-Remove Debris Satellite from the International Space Station (ISS). Nano Racks-Remove Debris aims to demonstrate key technologies for Active Debris Removal to reduce the risks presented by space debris. | 20 JUNE 2018/NASA PHOTO*

21 March 1994

**UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the key international treaty to reduce global warming and cope with the impacts of climate change, [enters into force](#). It is also a “Rio Convention”, one of three Conventions agreed at the “Rio Earth Summit” in 1992. Its sister Rio Conventions are the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. As at 15 December 2021, UNFCCC has 197 States parties.



*The extent of South Africa's reliance on coal is clear to see. In the province of Mpumalanga, the landscape is scarred with huge coal-fired power stations and vast open-cast mines, the surface of the countryside literally having been scraped away. The coal-mining process can leave water supplies unusable for irrigation, for industry and for consumption by animals and humans. | 7 FEBRUARY 2012/UN PHOTO/GILL FICKLING*

26 July 1994

**UNAIDS IS ESTABLISHED**

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is established to lead a coordinated international response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which affects all countries but has the greatest impact on developing countries. UNAIDS works on strengthening national capacity to develop HIV/AIDS-related strategies, including through technical and financial assistance, and working with Governments to mobilize communities around prevention and response.



*A worker from the Jordanian Ministry of Health talking with students in a school in Amman, Jordan about AIDS and AIDS prevention. [World Aids Day](#) (1 December) was founded in 1988 when HIV/AIDS was causing fear and prejudice towards certain segments of society. 1 DECEMBER 2001/UN PHOTO/G. PIROZZI*

■ 1 November 1994

## UN TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL SUSPENDS ITS OPERATIONS

The Trusteeship Council, one of the main United Nations organs tasked with supervising the administration of trust territories as they transition from colonies to sovereign nations, [holds its last session and suspends its operations](#) a month after [Palau, the last remaining UN trust territory, gains its independence](#). As the Council had no item on its agenda, it would continue to exist and would only meet if circumstances demanded.



Representatives of Haiti, the United States and China (left to right) on a visiting mission directed by the Trusteeship Council, observe schoolroom work of students in the trust territory of the French Cameroons. The mission traveled 3,000 miles by road to investigate steps taken to achieve the objectives in article 76-B of the UN Charter. French Cameroon became independent in 1960. | 1 NOVEMBER 1955/UN PHOTO

■ 8 November 1994

## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA IS ESTABLISHED

The [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda \(ICTR\)](#) is established to prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and neighbouring States. The ICTR becomes the [first international tribunal to deliver a verdict in relation to genocide on 2 September 1998](#), and subsequently sentences 62 individuals. It is also the first to provide a legal interpretation of the definition of genocide set forth in the 1948 [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#).



Through the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), food is distributed to Rwandan children at the Ndosha Camp, Zaire, who lost their parents in the massacres of the genocide against the Tutsi. | 25 JULY 1994/UN PHOTO/JOHN ISAAC

■ 4–15 September 1995

## FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (BEIJING '95)

An unprecedented 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists [gather in Beijing under the auspices of the United Nations for the Fourth World Conference on Women](#), where 189 countries unanimously adopt the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, reaffirming their commitment to ensuring that women and girls have the opportunity to reach their full potential and shape their lives according to their own aspirations. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [outlines objectives and actions under 12 critical areas of concern](#) to advance women's rights and the empowerment of women and girls.



Four women serving together on the International Space Station (clockwise from lower left: NASA astronaut Tracy Caldwell Dyson, Expedition 23 flight engineer; NASA astronaut Dorothy Metcalf-Lindenburger; Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Naoko Yamazaki; and NASA astronaut Stephanie Wilson) represented the highest number of women ever simultaneously in space. | 7 APRIL 2010/NASA PHOTO

■ 10 September 1996

**COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY IS ADOPTED**

The General Assembly [adopts the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty](#) and it opens for signature on 24 September 1996. As at 15 December 2021, it has 170 parties, but has not entered into force due to the requirement that all States listed in Annex 2 of the Treaty must ratify it. In later developments, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is adopted on 7 July 2017 and enters into force on 22 January 2021. As at 10 January 2022, the latter Treaty had 59 parties.

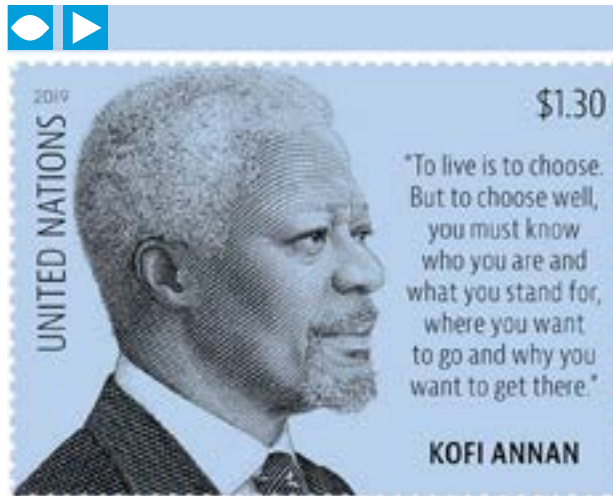


Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, reading a statement to media after visiting Ground Zero of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site in Kazakhstan, urges leaders of the world, particularly nuclear weapon states, to work together with the United Nations to realize the aspiration and dream of a world free of nuclear weapons.  
4 JUNE 2010, UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

■ 17 December 1996

**SEVENTH SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN (GHANA)**

The General Assembly appoints Kofi Annan of Ghana as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. His appointment marks the first for a UN staff member to emerge from the ranks and the first for a sub-Saharan African to serve as Secretary-General. He serves from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2006.



A UN stamp featuring the late Kofi Annan (1938–2018), who served as the seventh Secretary-General from 1997–2006, is issued on 31 May 2019. His native Ghana, in nominating Mr. Annan, deemed him a proud son of Africa who was sensitive to the problems faced by developing countries.

■ 26 December 1996

**UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) ENTERS INTO FORCE**

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) [enters into force](#). The Convention, [adopted on 17 June 1994](#), is the only legally binding international agreement that links environment and development to sustainable land management. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 197 States parties.



Eucalyptus plant taking root on sand dunes near Lompoul, Senegal. To prevent the desert from engulfing fertile land, the Government has undertaken tree-planting projects such as this with help from the UN Environment Programme and the UN Development Programme. [World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought \(17 June\)](#) is observed annually. | 1 JANUARY 1983/UN PHOTO/JOHN ISAAC



■ 11 December 1997

### KYOTO PROTOCOL IS ADOPTED

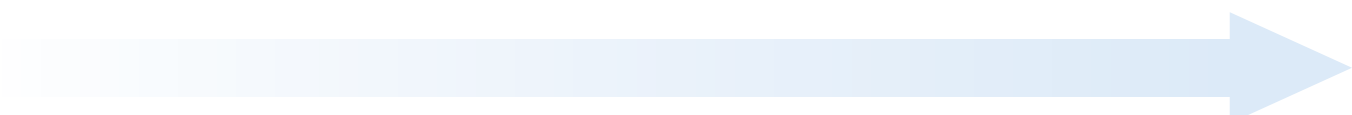
The [Kyoto Protocol](#), an international agreement aimed at managing and reducing carbon dioxide emissions and greenhouse gases, is adopted at the third Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 and [enters into force on 16 February 2005](#).

The Protocol commits industrialized countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. As at 15 December 2021, the Protocol has 192 States parties.



*A view of the Middelgrunden offshore wind farm in Denmark, which was developed off the Danish coast in 2000 and consists of 20 turbines. Wind energy does not emit any greenhouse gases and has an extremely good energy balance.*

25 MAY 2009/UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE



■ **6–8 September 2000**

**MILLENNIUM SUMMIT AND THE MDGS**

To meet the development challenges of the new century, the [UN Millennium Summit convenes 149 Heads of State and Government](#). World leaders commit to a global partnership to [achieve anti-poverty targets](#), of which eight are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs—ranging from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the year 2015—galvanize efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest. Extreme poverty steadily declines between 1990 and 2015 by about 1 percentage point per year and decreases at a slower pace from 2013 and 2017 before suffering a reversal due to the impact of COVID-19 in 2020.



A photo of the UN Millennium Summit, the largest-ever gathering of world leaders, is featured on the cover of the 2000 edition of the Yearbook of the United Nations.

■ **31 October 2000**

**SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325: WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

The Security Council passes [resolution 1325](#), recognizing that war impacts women differently and calling for women to be a key part of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Since then, nine supporting Security Council resolutions—[1820\(2008\)](#), [1888\(2009\)](#), [1889\(2009\)](#), [1960\(2010\)](#), [2106\(2013\)](#), [2122\(2013\)](#), [2242\(2015\)](#), [2467\(2019\)](#), and [2493\(2019\)](#)—have been passed addressing concerns from recognizing sexual violence as a tactic of war to providing an accountability system and putting in place stronger measures for women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery.



Women across the globe are actively preventing conflict and building peace. An interactive exhibition by women photographers, “In Their Hands”, shows the ways in which women are bringing and maintaining peace in Africa, the Middle East and South America. | SEPTEMBER 2021/ UN PHOTO/HANA HAZA’A

■ **23 May 2001**

**STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS IS ADOPTED**

UN Member States adopt the [Stockholm Convention](#) on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which aims to protect humans and the environment from harmful chemicals that persist for long periods in the environment, become widely distributed geographically and accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 185 States parties.



Mount Kenya—the second highest mountain in Africa and about 193 km north-east of Nairobi—was one of many sampling sites where the air was monitored and human milk samples were collected for laboratory analysis to produce data that would indicate the level of exposure of the general population to persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The research was conducted as part of the UNEP-implemented project entitled “Supporting the Implementation of the Global Monitoring Plan of POPs in Eastern and Southern African Countries”. | 17 MARCH 2013/ GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY PHOTO

10 December 2001

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO KOFI ANNAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

The Norwegian Nobel Committee announces in October 2001 that it will award the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to the [United Nations](#) and to [Secretary-General Kofi Annan](#) for “their work for a better organized and more peaceful world”. The Secretary-General receives the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December in Norway.



The United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, on the 100th anniversary of the prestigious award. 10 DECEMBER 2001/UN PHOTO/SERGEY BERMENIEV

1 July 2002

**ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT TAKES EFFECT**

The Rome Statute, the legal basis for establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC), [enters into force](#). Although the Statute was negotiated within the United Nations, the ICC is created as an independent judicial body to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.



Microfilmed documents, part of the UN War Crimes Commission Records (1943–1949), at the United Nations Archives in New York. | 14 OCTOBER 2014/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

8 March 2005

**DECLARATION ON HUMAN CLONING IS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

On the occasion of its Special Session on Children, the General Assembly adopts a [Declaration on Human Cloning](#) by which Member States are called upon to take all measures necessary to prohibit all forms of human cloning inasmuch as they are incompatible with human dignity and the protection of human life.



Delegates convening after the Sixth (Legal) Committee narrowly voted to postpone for two years debate on competing human cloning resolutions. | 6 NOVEMBER 2003/ UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN



■ 14–16 September 2005

**RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (R2P) CONCEPT UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE WORLD SUMMIT**

More than 170 Heads of State and Government attend the World Summit to take decisions in the areas of development, security, human rights and UN reform. They unanimously adopt the principle of the Responsibility To Protect (R2P), accepting the responsibility to protect their populations from genocide and other crimes against humanity and agreeing to help protect the people of nations unable to do so—noting if peaceful means are unavailable, the international community must act through the Security Council.



The International Court of Justice in session in the case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), at the Peace Palace, in The Hague. The hearings focused on the request of The Gambia for the indication of provisional measures to preserve the rights of the Rohingya group in Myanmar, its members and The Gambia under the Genocide Convention. | 10 DECEMBER 2019/UN PHOTO

■ 15 December 2005

**CENTRAL EMERGENCY REVOLVING FUND IS RENAMED**

Established in 1992 as a cash-flow mechanism for the initial phase of humanitarian emergencies, the UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) is upgraded in 2005 to ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian crises and underfunded emergencies. Renamed the Central Emergency Response Fund, it provides funds to jump start critical operations and life-saving programmes. Its annual funding target of \$1 billion is unearmarked to ensure funds go towards the most urgent needs. CERF is managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.



Lubile 1 Primary School in Tanganyika Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, was destroyed when militia groups clashed and inhabitants deserted the village. Three classrooms made of tarpaulin are being installed with CERF support in February 2021 to allow students to resume classes quickly. UNICEF undertakes the construction of permanent classrooms. | 18 MAY 2021/UNICEF/JOSUÉ MULALA

■ 20 December 2005

**UN PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE IS CREATED**

The General Assembly concurrently with the Security Council creates a United Nations Peacebuilding architecture comprising the Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Support Office, to better help countries emerging from conflict achieve a sustainable peace and prevent relapse into violence.



In Gbarnga, construction is underway for a new \$3.7 million justice and peace hub, paid for by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and being built by the United Nations Office for Project Services. The facilities will include courts, offices, barracks and training centres for security agencies, and serves much of central Liberia. A sign at the entrance of the Gbarnga Justice and Peace Hub. 13 APRIL 2012/UN PHOTO/STATON WINTER

15 March 2006

### HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IS ESTABLISHED

The General Assembly [establishes the Human Rights Council](#) (HRC), an inter-governmental body within the UN system responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. Its main function is to address human rights violations and emergencies wherever and whenever they occur and provide recommendations on how to better implement human rights on the ground. HRC has 47 members elected for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis. In 2021, the Secretary-General underscores in *Our Common Agenda* that international human rights law underpins 90 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals. As States make progress toward the goals, they are also fulfilling their human rights obligations.



Journalists taking photos of the voting board at the twenty-eighth special session of the Human Rights Council, which considered the deteriorating human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

18 MAY 2018/UN PHOTO/ELMA OKIC

13 October 2006

### EIGHTH SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON (REPUBLIC OF KOREA)

The General Assembly appoints [Ban Ki-moon as Secretary-General](#) of the United Nations. He begins his term of office on 1 January 2007 and leads the Organization until 31 December 2016.



Ban Ki-moon in his office at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on his second day as Secretary-General. He was appointed for an initial five-year term beginning on 1 January 2007. | 2 JANUARY 2007/UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

10 December 2007

### NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORMER UNITED STATES VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

The Norwegian Nobel Committee [awards the Nobel Peace Prize 2007](#) conjointly to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and former United States Vice President Al Gore for their efforts in collecting and diffusing knowledge on human-induced climatic changes. The prize comes on the heels of the [IPCC Fourth Assessment Report](#), which verifies with 90 per cent certainty that significant global warming is not only underway but is increasing to a degree directly attributable to human activity.



Al Gore (centre), former Vice President of the United States and Nobel Laureate, at the People's Climate March held in New York, ahead of the Climate Summit being hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at UN headquarters on 23 September. At right is Robert Orr, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning. 21 SEPTEMBER 2014/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

■ 3 May 2008

### CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ENTERS INTO FORCE

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [enters into force](#). It is the first international human rights treaty negotiated with the participation of civil society. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 184 States parties.



*Stevie Wonder, songwriter, musician and UN Messenger of Peace, sits on the panel of the high-level meeting of the 71st session of the General Assembly in New York to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*  
2 DECEMBER 2016/UN PHOTO/AMANDA VOISAR

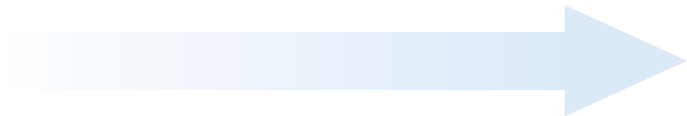
■ 7–19 December 2009

### COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE RAISES CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL

The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference raises climate change policy to the highest political level. Nearly 115 world leaders attend the high-level segment, making it one of the largest ever gatherings of world leaders outside UN Headquarters. Countries attending the Conference (7–19 December) agree to “take note” of a document entitled the [Copenhagen Accord](#). This includes the long-term goal of limiting the maximum global average temperature increase to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.



*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (third from left) visits the Polar ice rim in Norway to witness first-hand the impact of climate change on icebergs and glaciers. The visit is part of the Secretary-General’s campaign urging Member States to negotiate a fair, balanced and effective agreement at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December.*  
1 SEPTEMBER 2009/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN





■ 2 July 2010

**UN-WOMEN IS ESTABLISHED**

The General Assembly creates the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to accelerate progress on meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. The move comes as part of a United Nations reform agenda to merge and build on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system that were exclusively dedicated to empowering women: the Division for the Advancement of Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.



The *UN-Women Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice* calls for data that keeps governments accountable for progress on gender equality and climate justice.

■ 17 June 2011

**FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY**

Expressing grave concern at acts of violence and discrimination against individuals because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, the Human Rights Council adopts its first resolution in 2011 commissioning a study to document discriminatory laws against such individuals (17/19). Resolutions on the same issue are adopted in 2014 (27/32) and in 2016 (32/2).



Many young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people also face violence and discrimination because of their skin colour, gender, religion or disabilities, which aggravates their risk of homelessness.

■ 20–22 June 2012

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE ENVISIONS “THE FUTURE WE WANT”**

Twenty years after the 1992 Earth Summit, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) is held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to agree on new policies promoting global economic development and environmental protection. At the conclusion of the Conference, UN Member States adopt the Rio+20 outcome document entitled “The Future We Want”—a common vision for attaining sustainable development through renewed political commitment.



On opening day, 13 June 2012, a view inside the dedicated pavilion which sits opposite the Rio+20 conference facilities in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The pavilion hosts exhibits and events related to the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development and runs parallel to the summit until its 22 June closing. | 13 JUNE 2012/UN PHOTO/MARIA ELISA FRANCO

■ 29 November 2012

**STATE OF PALESTINE IS ACCORDED OBSERVER STATE STATUS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Following the 2011 [application of Palestine](#) for admission to United Nations membership, the General Assembly decides in 2012 to accord [non-Member Observer State status](#) to the State of Palestine.



Mahmoud Abbas (front centre), President of the Palestinian Authority with his delegation in the General Assembly Hall following the Assembly’s adoption of a resolution granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations. The [International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People \(29 November\)](#) is observed annually. 29 NOVEMBER 2012/UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNA

■ 20 December 2012

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION BANS FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

From an abiding concern over harmful practices that impact the rights of women and girls, the General Assembly [adopts resolution 67/146 to ban female genital mutilation](#), a practice affecting up to 140 million women and girls worldwide that constitutes a serious threat to their health and well-being. The resolution calls on States to take all necessary measures to prohibit female genital mutilation, protect women and girls from this violence, and end impunity surrounding its practice.

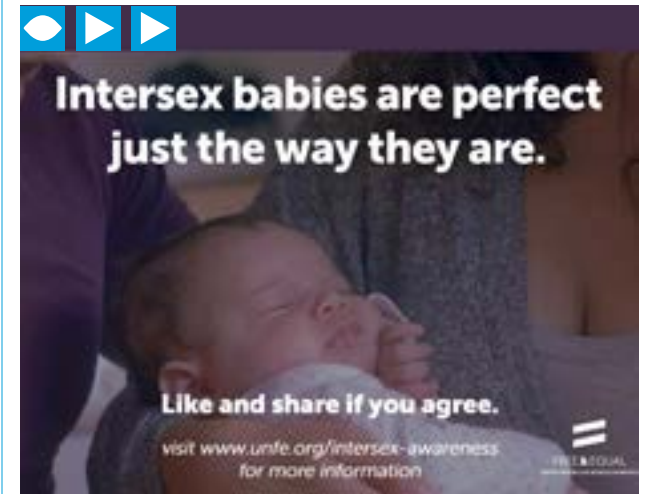


In 2018, United Nations Population Fund estimates showed that 68 million girls were at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation by 2030. However, the shadow pandemic—the growing rates of violence against women and girls amid the COVID-19 pandemic—has left millions of girls and women vulnerable to gender-based violence. Due to COVID-19, an additional two million girls are projected to be at risk of female genital mutilation by 2030.

■ 26 July 2013

**FIRST UN GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA**

Two years after a [2011 report](#) on discrimination and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity stated that all people are entitled to protection provided for by international human rights law, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launches UN Free & Equal, its first global public outreach campaign to promote equal rights and fair treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.



Through its Free & Equal campaign, the United Nations promotes intersex awareness. Up to 1.7 per cent of babies are born intersex—with physical traits that don’t meet typical definitions of male and female.

■ 5 September 2013

## DOMESTIC WORKERS' CONVENTION TAKES EFFECT

The [Domestic Workers' Convention](#) (Convention No. 189) on labour rights, adopted by the International Labour Organization, enters into force, giving domestic workers—most of whom are women—the same basic labour rights as other workers. As at 15 December 2021, the Convention has 35 States parties.



*The International Labour Organization (ILO) strategy for action towards making decent work a reality for domestic workers worldwide envisages support for countries that are committed and ready to take measures for improving the protection and working conditions of domestic workers.*

■ 10 December 2013

## THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS RECEIVES THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) (OPCW) for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.



*As the United Nations Chemical Weapons Inspection Team completes its tasks in Iraq, a bulldozer begins crushing 500 kg bombs designed for use as chemical weapons.*  
1 SEPTEMBER 1991/UN PHOTO/ARVIDSSON

■ August/September 2014

## EBOLA: FIRST-EVER EMERGENCY HEALTH MISSION (UNMEER)

The largest and most complex [Ebola outbreak ever spreads across West Africa in 2014](#) with severe humanitarian implications, including almost 30,000 cases and 11,235 deaths by 1 July 2015. United Nations action in August and September 2014 results in the creation of [its first-ever emergency health mission](#) to lead the international response to the crisis. The [United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response \(UNMEER\)](#) is established on 19 September 2014 and closes on 31 July 2015, having achieved its core objective of scaling up the response on the ground. The World Health Organization declares an end to the pandemic on 29 March 2016.



*The National Ebola Response Centre in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on the launch day of UNMEER Operation Western Area Surge. The Surge, which aims to help reverse a spike in the rate of transmission of Ebola virus disease in the Western Area of Sierra Leone, focuses on crucial activities such as identifying and isolating potential patients and increasing safe burials, ambulance dispatching, quarantine protocols and social mobilization.*  
17 DECEMBER 2014/UN PHOTO/MARTINE PERRET



■ 31 October 2014

**IPCC FIFTH ASSESSMENT REPORT: CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL, HUMANS ARE THE CAUSE**

At its fortieth session, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) adopts its [Fifth Assessment Report](#), which definitively concludes that climate change is real and humans are the main cause. The report notes that recent anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are the highest in history, recent climate changes have widely impacted natural systems, and adaptation and mitigation are complementary strategies, not solutions. Only substantial emissions reductions over the next few decades can reduce climate risks.



Since 2010, the annual UNEP Emissions Gap Report has compared emissions levels against where they should be to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

■ 18 March 2015

**SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IS ADOPTED**

At the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, UN Member States adopt the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030). Following the 2005 [Hyogo Declaration and Framework for Action](#), this first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster. The Sendai Framework complements other 2030 Agenda agreements, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the New Urban Agenda, and ultimately the Sustainable Development Goals.



A UNTV cameraman covering the destruction caused by the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of 26 December 2004 in Mullaitivu, a town in northeastern Sri Lanka. The tsunami claimed the lives of nearly 5,000 members of the community while another 800 were still listed as missing. 15 JANUARY 2005/UN PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER

■ 25 September 2015

**UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT AND THE SDGS**

Following a [review of the implementation of previous development agendas](#) and broad and unprecedented consultation with development partners and stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the private sector and people around the world, UN Member States unite to adopt the 2030 Agenda—promising they will act on this transformative vision by setting [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) that span education through gender equality to sustainable energy for all. For each SDG there are specific targets, along with indicators that are used to measure progress towards each target.

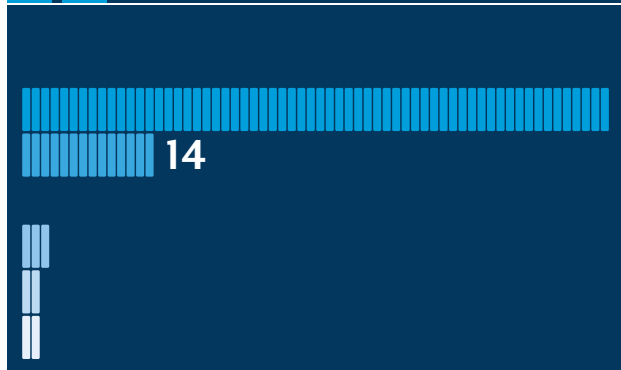


Solar roof EV charging stations provide both energy and shade. In hot, dense cities with intermittent access to electricity, this infrastructure can deliver an added secondary financial benefit as power is sold back to the grid. The Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) “This Is Cool” initiative shows what can be done to make sustainable cooling a reality. An SEforAll office in New York has been established to strengthen collaboration with the United Nations and drive more impactful work through UN-Energy.

December 2015

### FORMAL CLOSURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) delivers its last trial judgement on [20 December 2012 in the Ngirabatware case](#). During the same year, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), [established by the Security Council in 2010](#), assumes responsibility for ICTR residual functions. ICTR formally closes after its last appeals judgement in December 2015.



14

For the first time in history, an international tribunal—the ICTR—delivered verdicts against persons responsible for committing genocide. The ICTR was also the first institution to recognize rape as a means of perpetrating genocide.

22 April 2016

### PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED

In a year of record heat, UN Member States propel the Paris Climate Change Agreement into force at record speed. The Agreement opens for signature on 22 April 2016 and 175 countries sign on to the treaty to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius. Almost 100 countries ratify it by November. The historic agreement is signed 42 years after the UNEP Governing Council decides [to seek to increase knowledge and understanding of “climatic change”](#) in March 1974. As at 15 December 2021, the Agreement has 193 States parties.



*Jan Kubis (left), Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and Louis Palmer, organizer of the Zero-Emissions electric car race, starting the race outside the UN Office at Geneva. Powered by renewable energy—solar, wind, wave and geothermal—the zero emissions vehicles will travel once around the world in 80 days, across 17 countries, for a total of 28,000 kilometres. The competition emphasizes vehicle efficiency and reliability and is supported in part by the UN Environment Programme. 16 AUGUST 2010/ UN PHOTO/JEAN-MARC FERRÉ*

13 October 2016

### NINTH SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES (PORTUGAL)

In line with a [report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly](#), transparency plays a critical role in the selection of the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. In the most transparent selection process ever, candidates present themselves to the world in the first-ever televised debates. After being appointed by the General Assembly on 13 October 2016, António Guterres begins his term of office on 1 January 2017. He is appointed to a second five-year term on 18 June 2021.



*António Guterres (right) takes the oath of office for his second five-year term starting 1 January 2022 and ending 31 December 2026. The oath is administered by Volkan Bozkir, President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly. | 18 JUNE 2021/UN PHOTO/MANUEL ELÍAS*

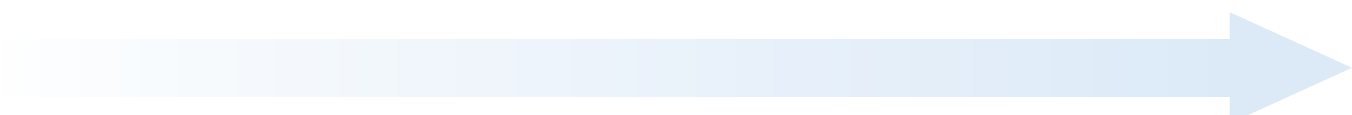
■ 31 May 2019

## FIRST UN BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT REPORT: SPECIES EXTINCTION WILL UNDERMINE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The maintenance of biodiversity, also known as [biological diversity](#), has been a United Nations concern since the 1980s. More than thirty years later, in the first comprehensive UN assessment report on biodiversity, 145 experts and 310 contributing authors conclude that nature is declining at unprecedented rates, with 1 million animal and plant species threatened with extinction, many within decades. Without rapid transformative change, negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress in 80 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets on poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land. International Biodiversity Day (22 May), proclaimed by the General Assembly in 2000, raises awareness of the Convention on Biological Diversity.



*Trees in a forest in the state of New York (United States) after a rainstorm. The first State of the World's Forests report was released in 1995. The 2020 report shows how forests, and the people who use and manage them, contribute to the sustainable use of biodiversity. | 3 JUNE 2020/UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN*





■ 30 January 2020

## COVID-19 GLOBAL EMERGENCY IS DECLARED

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declares the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)—first reported in Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019—a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). In the months that follow, the Secretary-General calls for a global ceasefire, launches a Global Humanitarian Response Plan and develops the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 to save lives, protect societies and recover better. WHO guidelines for declaring PHEICs were formulated after the [severe acute respiratory syndrome \(SARS\)](#) outbreak in 2002–2004. Since 2005, WHO has declared six PHEICs, twice for Ebola.



COVID-19 has upended family life around the world, as parents and children navigate the challenges of school closures and remote working. In Ha Noi, Vietnam, these children must study and quarantine with their family at home during the pandemic. | UNICEF/TRUONG VIET HUNG

■ 2 March 2020

## SECRETARY-GENERAL ISSUES FIRST PROGRESS REPORT ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

In a year that witnesses the third (2020) review of the [UN peacebuilding architecture](#), the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325(2000) on [women and peace and security](#) and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the Secretary-General issues the first progress report on youth, peace and security, highlighting the growing recognition of young people's essential role in preventing and resolving conflicts and in sustaining peace. In 2021, he notes in his report on *Our Common Agenda* that the world is now home to the largest generation of young people in history: numbering 1.8 billion persons, and recommends more meaningful and effective youth engagement both within and outside the United Nations.



A group photo of youth migration advocates that met with Secretary-General António Guterres on the side of the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (10–11 December 2018) in Marrakech, Morocco, convened under the auspices of the General Assembly. The [Economic and Social Council Youth Forum](#) will be held 19–20 April 2022.

■ 24 October 2020

## UNITED NATIONS CELEBRATES ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations comes at a time of great disruption for the world, compounded by the unprecedented COVID-19 global health crisis. But it is also a reminder that times of struggle can become an opportunity for positive change and transformation. To commemorate the occasion, Member States hold a high-level event on 21 September to reaffirm that our challenges are interconnected and can only be addressed through reinvigorated multilateralism. It is also a moment to reflect on what the [Organization has accomplished](#).



**THE UNITED NATIONS**

- Combats** pandemics: leads the global response of the unprecedented COVID-19
- Provides** food and assistance to 86.7 million people in 83 countries
- Supplies** vaccines to 50% of the world's children, helps save 3 million lives a year
- Assists** and protects 82.5 million people fleeing war, famine and persecution
- Works** with 196 nations to keep the global temperature rise well below 2°C/3.6°F
- Keeps** peace with 95,000 peacekeepers in 13 operations around the world
- Tackles** the global water crisis affecting over 2.2 billion people worldwide
- Protects** and promotes human rights globally and through 80 treaties/declarations
- Coordinates** US\$28.8 billion appeal for the humanitarian needs of 108.8 million people
- Uses** diplomacy to prevent conflict: assists some 50 countries a year with their elections
- Helps** over 2 million women a month overcome pregnancy and childbirth complications

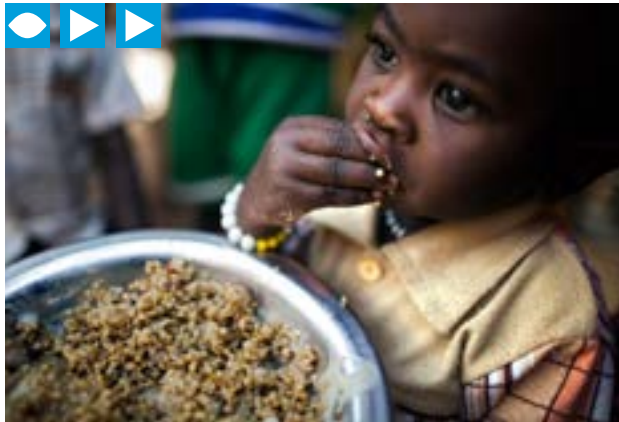
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At 75, the UN founding mission is more critical than ever. Immense challenges can be overcome with international solidarity and cooperation. The UN Card, published annually since 2009, updates 11 actions of the United Nations that show in quantifiable terms how the daily work of the United Nations and its agencies affects the lives of people around the globe.

■ 10 December 2020

### NOBEL PEACE PRIZE IS AWARDED TO THE UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) “for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict.” [WFP began operations](#), on an experimental basis, on 1 January 1963.



*A child has a meal at a food distribution centre in the Rwanda camp for internally displaced persons near Tawila, North Darfur. More than 8,000 women and children living in the camp benefit from nutrition programmes run by the World Food Programme. | 4 APRIL 2014/UN PHOTO/ALBERT GONZALEZ FARRAN*

■ December 2021

### RECORD HIGH NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

One of the main pillars of UN work is providing [humanitarian assistance](#). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact lives, in December 2021, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022. This number is a significant increase from 235 million people in 2021, which was already the highest figure in decades. In response, the United Nations and partner organizations aim to assist 183 million people most in need across 63 countries, requiring \$41 billion.



*In 2021, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) intensified its collaboration with the international freight and logistics sector to close gaps in the global vaccine and humanitarian supply chains, which remained operational for children and families in countries such as Yemen and other emergency settings. | 25 NOVEMBER 2021/UNICEF/EBRAHIM AL-ROUNY*

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## **BUILDING THE FUTURE: STEPPING STONES IN UNITED NATIONS HISTORY**

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