**THE UNITED NATIONSORGANISATION (UN)**

**How the UN works**

***Warm-up***

**Read the following text and answer the questions:**

1. What does the phrase “an international organization” mean in the conventional sense?
2. What is a non institutional aspect to the phrase “an international organization”?
3. In what ways can coordination of an international organization be performed? What do they involve?
4. What criterion is considered to be the most important for the existence of an international organization?
5. What does an international organization consist of?

**International Organizations**

The very term international organization is ambiguous. In the conventional sense, an international organization is an institution or structure similar to Congress or to a city council; it has a definite set of rules, members, agenda, places and times of meeting. A second meaning of the concept is implied as well. If organization is an arrangement of parts into a unified whole, then there is a no institutional aspect to the phrase international organization. The purpose of organization is conscious coordination of activity; the method of organization is to routinize coordination by such techniques as division of labour and task specialization. Coordination can be performed either formally or informally. When coordination is formal, it takes place within official structures and institutional machinery; this is the conventional significance of the term organization in international relations. Informal coordination involves an unwritten system of practices in which units of the system assume such roles as those of leader or nonleader. International organization in the second sense refers to informal role differentiation in the world polity. Often this second meeting has been called world organization.

In international relations, units that are most powerful take leadership roles; weak units are nonleaders. Thus, international organization in the first sense is a dependent variable of world organization, the second interpretation of the term. Informal organization is more basic than formal organization; characteristics of international structures are a function of the nature of the international arena. In the subsequent portion of this discussion the term international organization will be used to refer only to the meaning of the term in the conventional sense.

Not all organizations are international. Historically the types of units in the world political system have changed in form and in number. Traditionally, an international organization has been said to exist when many nation-states are linked together structurally. If this criterion were adopted, the study of international organization would date only from the year 1648, when the nation-state system was officially christened in the Peace of Westphalia. Previously there were other basic units – the empire, the city state, the free city, and the dynamic state. A loose definition of international organization would say that it consists of intergovernmental institutions, members of which perceive each other to be basic units of the world polity. Any world system may contain international organization.

***Pronunciation***

**Watch the pronunciation of the following words and word combinations. If necessary consult a dictionary:**

Charter

harmonizing

sovereign

affecting

a vast array

survival

alleviation

environmental

reluctant

fluctuated

prominence

the Hague

the Netherlands

***Reading***

**Read the text and find the answers to the following questions:**

1. What is the UN?
2. What country is the UN situated in?
3. When was the UN established and for what purpose?
4. What are the main organs of the UN?

The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945 by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. Today, nearly every nation in the world belongs to the UN: membership now totals nearly 200 countries.

When states become members of the United Nations, they agree to accept obligations of the UN Charter, an international treaty which sets out basic principles of international relations. According to the Charter, the UN has four purposes: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations.

UN members are sovereign countries. The United Nations is not a world government, and it does not make laws. It does, however, provide the means to help resolve international conflicts and formulate policies on matters affecting all of us. It serves as a symbol of international order and global identity.

The United Nations is much more than a peacekeeper and forum for conflict resolution. Often without attracting attention, the United Nations is engaged in a vast array of work that touches every aspect of people’s lives around the world.

Child survival and development. Environmental protection. Human rights. Health and medical research. Alleviation of poverty and economic development. Agricultural development and fisheries. Education. Family planning. Emergency and disaster relief. Air and sea travel. Peaceful uses of atomic energy. Labour and worker’s rights. The list goes on and on.

The UN’s influence in world affairs has fluctuated over the years, but the organization gained new prominence beginning in the 1990s. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001. Still, the UN faces constant challenges. It must continually secure the cooperation of its member nations because the organization has little independent power or authority. But getting that support is not always easy. Many nations are reluctant to defer their authority and follow the dictates of the UN.

The United Nations has six main organs. Five of them – the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat – are based at UN Headquarters in New York. The sixth, the International Court of Justice, is located at the Hague, the Netherlands.

***Scanning***

**1. Answer the following questions:**

1. How many countries does the UN membership total today?
2. What main principles does the UN Charter set out?
3. Is the UN just a forum for conflict resolution?
4. What do the countries joining the UN agree to accept?
5. Why does the UN have little independent power or authority?
6. What other purposes does the UN serve?
7. When did the UN gain its new prominence?

**2. Give as much information as possible concerning the following notions:**

the UN

the UN Charter

a world government

a peacekeeper and forum for conflict resolution.

the Nobel Peace Prize

UN Headquarters

**3.Prepare the summary of the text in 10-12 sentences. Use the active vocabulary from the *Word Study* section.**

***Word Study***

**1. Give the definitions of the following words and phrases from the text and use them in the sentences of your own:**

1. to be committed to
2. to total
3. obligations
4. to set out (basic principles)
5. to maintain (peace)
6. to harmonize (actions)
7. to resolve (conflicts)
8. a peacekeeper
9. a vast array
10. alleviation of (poverty)
11. to fluctuate
12. to gain (prominence)
13. to secure (cooperation)
14. to defer (authority)
15. headquarters
16. **Translate the following sentences from Russian into English using active vocabulary:**
17. ООН включает в себя 192 независимые страны, которые следуют основным принципам Устава ООН.
18. Целью этой организации является поддержание мира между народами и разрешение всех спорных вопросов путем переговоров.
19. Устав ООН был подписан в 1945 году 50 государствами в Сан-Франциско, Калифорния.
20. Штаб-квартира ООН находится в США с филиалами в Париже, Риме и Женеве.
21. При вступлении в ООН страны торжественно обещают разрешать все спорные вопросы мирным путем. Однако это обещание не всегда легко сдержать.
22. Основные задачи ООН по уставу – поддержание мира и безопасности, разрешение конфликтов, развитие дружественных связей между странами и обеспечение соблюдения прав человека.
23. ООН призывает страны воздерживаться от использования силы в межгосударственных отношениях. Иразрешатьконфликтымирнымпутем.

***Talking Point***

**Express your opinion on the following questions:**

1. Do you think the UN fulfils its mission today?
2. Do you think that the role of the UN is really very important in the modern world? Substantiate your point of view.
3. Is there any country in the world that the UN should refuse to admit as its member? Give your reasons.