

## The Trusteeship Council

The Trusteeship Council was assigned under the UN Charter to supervise the administration of 11 Trust Territories—former colonies or



dependent territories—which were placed under the International Trusteeship System. The system was created at the end of the World War II to promote the advancement of the inhabitants of those dependent

Territories and their progressive development towards self-governance or independence.

Since the creation of the Trusteeship Council, more than 70 colonial Territories, including all 11 Trust Territories, have attained independence with the help of the United Nations. The last Trust Territory to become independent was Palau in 1994, and, as a result, the Council decided formally to suspend its operation and to meet as and when occasion might require.

The Trusteeship Council is comprised of the permanent members of the Security Council—China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. Each member has one vote, and decisions are made by a simple majority.

Learn more about the UN Trusteeship Council: [www.un.org/en/decolonization/](http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/)

## The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the UN's main judicial organ, located in The Hague, Netherlands. Established in 1945, the ICJ, or "World Court" assumed its functions in 1946.

The Court settles legal disputes only between nations and not between individuals, in accordance with international law. If a country does not wish to take part in a proceeding, it does not have to do so, unless required by special treaty provisions. Once a country accepts the Court's jurisdiction, it must comply with its decision.

Since 1946, the International Court of Justice has considered over 150 cases and issued numerous judgments on international disputes brought to it by states involving economic rights, environmental



protection, rights of passage, the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, diplomatic relations, hostage-taking, the right of asylum and nationality.

It has also issued advisory opinions in response to requests by a range of United Nations organizations. All judgments passed by the Court are final and without appeal.

It is presided over by 15 judges elected for 9-year terms, each from a different nation, both by the General Assembly and the Security Council. No two judges can be from the same country. Elections take place every three years for one-third of the seats, and retiring judges may be re-elected. The Members of the Court do not represent their governments but are independent magistrates. It takes a majority of nine judges to make a decision.

The seat of the International Court of Justice is at The Hague in the Netherlands. The offices of the Court occupy the "Peace Palace", which was constructed by the Carnegie Foundation, a private non-profit organization, to serve as the headquarters of the Permanent Court of International Justice, the predecessor of the present Court. The UN makes an annual contribution to the Foundation for the use of the building.

Learn more about the International Court of Justice: [www.icj-cij.org/](http://www.icj-cij.org/)

### The Secretariat

The Secretariat is made up of an international staff working at UN Headquarters in New York, as well as UN offices in Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and other locations. It consists of departments and offices with a total staff of 16,000 drawn from most Member States. They carry out the day-to-day work of the Organization. Their duties are as varied as the problems dealt with by the United Nations. These range from administering peacekeeping operations, mediating international disputes, surveying social and economic trends, laying the ground work for international agreements to organizing international conferences.

The Secretariat is responsible for servicing the other organs of the

United Nations and administering the programmes and policies laid down by them.

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a 5-year term and is responsible for implementing decisions taken by various organs of the United Nations. As the chief administrative officer of the Organization, the Secretary-General directs the work of staff known as "international civil servants".

Unlike diplomats, who represent a particular country and its interests, international civil servants work for all 193 Member States and take their orders not from governments, but



from the Secretary-General. They are independent from political and other forms of interference and place the interests of the Organization above their own.

The Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which, in his opinion, may threaten international peace and security. He can use his "good offices" to prevent conflicts or promote peaceful settlements of disputes between countries. The Secretary-General may also act on his own initiative to deal with

humanitarian or other problems of special importance.

There have been eight Secretaries-General since the founding of the UN: Trygve Lie (Norway), 1946-1952; Dag Hammarskjöld (Sweden), 1953-1961; U Thant (Burma, now Myanmar), 1961-1971; Kurt Waldheim (Austria), 1972-1981; Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru), 1982-1991; Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt), 1992-1996; Kofi Annan (Ghana), 1997-2006; and Ban Ki-moon (Republic of Korea), 2007-present.

Learn more about the UN Secretariat: [www.un.org/en/mainbodies/secretariat/](http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/secretariat/)

Learn more about the UN Secretary-General: [www.un.org/sg/](http://www.un.org/sg/)