

# Origin and Structure of the United Nations

## ORIGIN OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The name “United Nations” was devised by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was first used in the “Declaration by United Nations” of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers. The United Nations Charter was drawn up by the representatives of 50 countries at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, which met in San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. Those delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals that had been worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States at Dumbarton Oaks in August-October 1944. The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States.

The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and a majority of other signatories. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year.

## UNITED NATIONS GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly is the central organ of the United Nations, where every nation can speak up and be heard on any matter. All the members of the



*The United Nations located in New York City.*

United Nations are represented in it. Each country's vote carries equal weight. Important questions are decided by a two-thirds majority vote.

### SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council was designed to be the main guardian of world peace. While the General Assembly can discuss any world concern, the Security Council deals only with questions of peace and security. All the members of the UN have agreed to accept the decisions of the Security Council and to carry them out.

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

The Economic and Social Council is called ECOSOC for short. It coordinates the major specialized agencies and institutions, and is concerned with economic problems, such as trade, transport, industrialization and economic development and social issues, including population, children, housing, women's rights, racial discrimination, narcotic drugs, crime, social welfare, children, human environment and food. The council has 54 members, who serve for three-year terms. Voting

## ACTIVITY

The name of the United Nations came from the thoughts of President Roosevelt, and the structure of the UN also has a strong resemblance to the structural organization of the United States. Given the information in the previous section about the United Nations, have students do a comparative analysis with the government of the United States. Include in that analysis the ways in which the two systems are different, and explain the reasons why they are. A similar comparison might also be made to the governmental structure of Great Britain, China, The Russian Federation, France, or any other nation. When these analyses have been completed, some very important conclusions might be drawn about the nature of government, its need for at least the appearance of representation, the concept of democratic participation, and the need for a justice system based upon the notion of fairness.