

Lesson 32

United Nations and Economic and Social Development

Summary -

UN and its affiliated agencies play an important role in the promotion of international co-operation in the economic and social fields. The United Nations considered that stable peace cannot be achieved without economic and social development of all nations. Hence, much of the UN's resources are devoted to economic and social activities. Since 1960 economic and social development of the newly independent poor countries has been the main preoccupation of the United Nations.

Major UN Initiatives for Socio-Economic Development

Starting from 1960 many of the colonies emerged as independent countries and gained membership of the United Nations

United Nations launched the First Development Decade, In 1960s international institutions, the UN Development Programme, UN Industrial Development Organisation, International Development Association were got up in 1960s

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was formed in 1964 to promote international trade

NIEO was founded on the principles, such as, participation of all countries to solve world economic problems on the basis of equality

United Nations convened important conferences related to development are on Environment and Development, Conference on Human Rights (1993), International Conference on Population and Development (1994), World Summit for Social Development (1995), World Conference on Women (1995), and the UN City Summit on Human Settlement (1997).

Network of UN Development Agencies -

- ✚ The UN structure for planning, coordinating, administering, & implementing its economic and social programmes is vast & decentralized.

Regional economic commissions -

- ✚ which focus on the problems salient to their geographical areas. Five such commissions have been established.

Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) -

The General Assembly provides general direction and supervision for economic and social activities.

- ✚ ECOSOC concentrates solely on this work and has operated with the assistance of functional commissions.

A few other bodies exist in the economic and social field which are not as directly subject to ECOSOC direction or control, but which are closely related to ECOSOC activities. These agencies include:

- (1) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- (2) The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- (3) The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCR)

(4) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

(5) The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

(6) World Food Programme

(7) The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Development Assistance Activities -

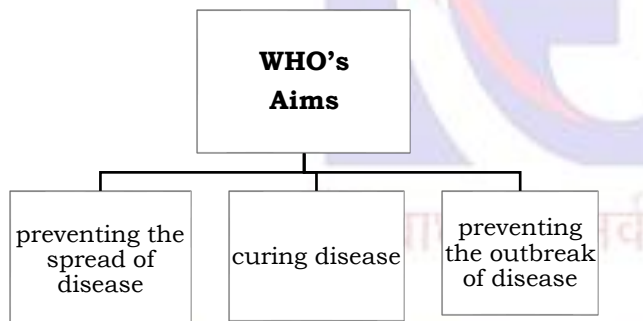
Established in 1965, UNDP is the leading development agency of the UN system. UNDP projects are:

- ✚ Promoting gender equality
- ✚ UNDP Food Security Programme has addressed the feminization of agriculture & women's empowerment
- ✚ It announced the establishment of a new UNDP Democratic Governance Trust Fund to launch programmes in public sector reform
- ✚ Improving parliamentary system conflict prevention & peacebuilding in the least developed countries
- ✚ UNDP in partnership with the Indian government has initiated a project in Kutch district to promote productive use of renewable energy
- ✚ UNDP supported project on 'Community Health Financing Initiative
- ✚ UNDP launched a new initiative to provide technology training in community education centres across the developing world.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) –

Created in 1946, UNICEF concentrates exclusively on the task of improving the lot of disadvantaged children.

- ✚ UNICEF has undertaken projects on health, education, malaria eradication, nutrition, rural development, family and child welfare and emergency aid to promote child welfare.
- ✚ In recognition of its social and humanitarian efforts, UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965.
- ✚ It focuses on India in a very big way.



The Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) –

- ✚ Concentrates on rural development, this Rome based agency works for alleviation of poverty & hunger by promoting agriculture development, improved nutrition, and easy access of food.

The World Bank Group –

- ✚ The United Nations are the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) or World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Also called the Bretton Woods institutions.
- ✚ IMF provides temporary funds to aid governments in correcting balance of payment deficits.
- ✚ The World Bank group is the largest multilateral source of funds for development projects for infrastructure development.
- ✚ World Bank's loan falls into two broad categories. Investment loans are long-term loans aimed to create the physical and social infrastructure necessary for poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- ✚ Other sources of multilateral financing for development include regional banks - the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Evaluate yourself –

1. Write down about the economic & social development activities of United Nations.
2. List down the functions of the World Bank as the main UN financial agency.
3. Write down the short note on the functions of FAO in your own words.