

Major Agencies of the United Nations

The United Nations has several specialised agencies which work to improve the social and economic conditions of a country.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was set up by the UN General Assembly to help children who suffered during the Second World War. It also catered to the needs of the children in post-war Europe. Later, it began fulfilling the needs of all developing nations in the world. Currently, the agency is known as the United Nations Children's Fund.
- It is headquartered in New York and has more than 200 offices in developing countries.
- UNICEF depends on voluntary contributions made by the governments of many countries, donations made by private agencies, sale of greeting cards and through various fundraising activities.



The logo of UNICEF

The **objective** of UNICEF is to look after the welfare of children especially in developing countries. This is done by providing low-cost community-based services in child health, nutrition and vaccination.

Functions of UNICEF

- It protects children who struggle for survival, have health concerns and looks after their well-being.
- It provides services in primary health care, nutrition, basic education and sanitation in the developing countries.
- It also provides funds for training health and sanitation workers, teachers and nutritionists. It provides technical supplies and stationery material related to education such as paper and textbooks.
- It also provides help to children during emergencies arising from natural calamities, civil wars and spread of epidemics.
- It takes several steps to prevent diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and skin diseases.
- It also speaks on behalf of children and upholds the Convention on the Rights of the Child and works for its implementation.

UNICEF Programmes in India

UNICEF has been doing great work in India. Major programmes launched in India with the help and guidance of UNICEF are

- The government of India with assistance provided by UNICEF has launched the National Mission for Drinking Water and the National Literacy Mission.
- Many community development programmes have been started in the rural areas of India with the help provided by UNICEF.
- The government of India started the production of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) to reduce infant and child mortality rates because of diseases related to diarrhoea.
- The government along with UNICEF and other agencies have been working together for promoting iodised salt to prevent iodine deficiency disorders.
- UNICEF in partnership with the government of India has been taking steps to accelerate the rural water supply programme.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization is a specialised agency for health. 7 April is celebrated as World Health Day every year.

The **objective** of the World Health Organization is to make efforts to help people to reach the highest level of health. WHO has defined health as a state of complete well-being.

The headquarters of WHO is located at Geneva in Switzerland.

Functions of WHO

- It helps many countries to improve their health systems by improving the quality of services for individuals and the community.
- It provides important drugs and medicines required for medical purposes. WHO has launched important programmes to immunise children against measles, diphtheria, tetanus, tuberculosis, polio and whooping cough.
- It promotes research studies to cure and prevent diseases.
- It works towards providing safe drinking water.
- It aims towards fighting diseases and preventing them from spreading.
- It makes special efforts in fighting against diarrheal diseases among infants and young children.



Logo of the World
Health Organisation

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was set up on 4 November 1946.

The objectives of UNESCO are to promote peace and security in the world by promoting cooperation among various nations through education, science and cultural exchange. It is headquartered in Paris.

Functions of UNESCO in Education

- To work for eradication of illiteracy by encouraging distance education and open school systems.
- To stress upon the education of women and girls.
- To finance the education of disabled children.
- To provide grants and fellowships to teachers and scholars and to promote international understanding through education.
- To organise book fairs and festivals at national and international levels.
- To promote education as an instrument for international understanding.



Logo of UNESCO

Functions of UNESCO in Science and Scientific Activities

- UNESCO organises seminars and conferences of scientists. *Courier* is the official monthly magazine of UNESCO.
- It promotes research studies in Geology, Mathematics, Physics and Oceanography.
- It encourages the study of social sciences to focus attention on combating all forms of discrimination.
- It helps in correcting imbalance in the existing scientific and technological manpower.

Functions of UNESCO in Communication

- It helps the developing and underdeveloped countries in developing communication.
- It improves the quality of the Press, films and video devices.
- It upholds the freedom of press and media.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

- It provides finance, technical advice and equipment for the preservation of monuments and other important works of art.
- It provides encouragement to artistic creations in literature and fine arts.
- It works towards the cultural development through the medium of fine arts.
- It sends cultural missions to various countries. This helps in promoting peace and prosperity.

India's Association with UNESCO

- India has been a member of UNESCO since its beginning in 1946.
- In 1949, a National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO was set by the government of India.
- This consisted of five sub-committees—Education, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Culture and Communication.
- The National Commission promotes the programmes of UNESCO and helps send people to participate in international conferences, seminars and workshops organised by UNESCO.
- UNESCO provides funds and various expert services for the protection and maintenance of several historical monuments like the Taj Mahal.