

# Overview

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.



UN Photo  
United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

Due to the powers vested in its [Charter](#) and its unique international character, the United Nations can take action on the issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more.

The UN also provides a forum for its members to express their views in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies and committees. By enabling dialogue between its members, and by hosting negotiations, the Organization has become a mechanism for governments to find areas of agreement and solve problems together.

The UN's Chief Administrative Officer is the [Secretary-General](#).

2020 marks the [75th anniversary](#) of the United Nations.

## Member States

## A

Member State	Date of Admission
Afghanistan	19-11-46
Albania	14-12-55
Algeria	08-10-62
Andorra	28-07-93
Angola	01-12-76
Antigua and Barbuda	11-11-81
Argentina	24-10-45
Armenia	02-03-92
Australia	01-11-45
Austria	14-12-55
Azerbaijan	02-03-92
Bahamas	18-09-73
Bahrain	21-09-71
Bangladesh	17-09-74
Barbados	09-12-66
Belarus	24-10-45
Belgium	27-12-45
Belize	25-09-81
Benin	20-09-60
Bhutan	21-09-71
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	14-11-45
Bosnia and Herzegovina	22-05-92
Botswana	17-10-66
Brazil	24-10-45
Brunei Darussalam	21-09-84
Bulgaria	14-12-55
Burkina Faso	20-09-60

Burundi	18-09-62
Cabo Verde	16-09-75
Cambodia	14-12-55
Cameroon	20-09-60
Canada	09-11-45
Central African Republic	20-09-60
Chad	20-09-60
Chile	24-10-45
China	24-10-45
Colombia	05-11-45
Comoros	12-11-75
Congo	20-09-60
Costa Rica	02-11-45
Côte D'Ivoire	20-09-60
Croatia	22-05-92
Cuba	24-10-45
Cyprus	20-09-60
Czech Republic	19-01-93
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	17-09-91
Democratic Republic of the Congo	20-09-60
Denmark	24-10-45
Djibouti	20-09-77
Dominica	18-12-78
Dominican Republic	24-10-45
Ecuador	21-12-45
Egypt	24-10-45
El Salvador	24-10-45
Equatorial Guinea	12-11-68
Eritrea	28-05-93

Estonia	17-09-91
Eswatini	24-09-68
Ethiopia	13-11-45
Fiji	13-10-70
Finland	14-12-55
France	24-10-45
Gabon	20-09-60
Gambia (Republic of The)	21-09-65
Georgia	31-07-92
Germany	18-09-73
Ghana	08-03-57
Greece	25-10-45
Grenada	17-09-74
Guatemala	21-11-45
Guinea	12-12-58
Guinea Bissau	17-09-74
Guyana	20-09-66
Haiti	24-10-45
Honduras	17-12-45
Hungary	14-12-55
Iceland	19-11-46
India	30-10-45
Indonesia	28-09-50
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	24-10-45
Iraq	21-12-45
Ireland	14-12-55
Israel	11-05-49
Italy	14-12-55
Jamaica	18-09-62

Japan	18-12-56
Jordan	14-12-55
Kazakhstan	02-03-92
Kenya	16-12-63
Kiribati	14-09-99
Kuwait	14-05-63
Kyrgyzstan	02-03-92
Lao People's Democratic Republic	14-12-55
Latvia	17-09-91
Lebanon	24-10-45
Lesotho	17-10-66
Liberia	02-11-45
Libya	14-12-55
Liechtenstein	18-09-90
Lithuania	17-09-91
Luxembourg	24-10-45
Madagascar	20-09-60
Malawi	01-12-64
Malaysia	17-09-57
Maldives	21-09-65
Mali	28-09-60
Malta	01-12-64
Marshall Islands	17-09-91
Mauritania	27-10-61
Mauritius	24-04-68
Mexico	07-11-45
Micronesia (Federated States of)	17-09-91
Monaco	28-05-93
Mongolia	27-10-61

Montenegro	28-06-06
Morocco	12-11-56
Mozambique	16-09-75
Myanmar	19-04-48
Namibia	23-04-90
Nauru	14-09-99
Nepal	14-12-55
Netherlands	10-12-45
New Zealand	24-10-45
Nicaragua	24-10-45
Niger	20-09-60
Nigeria	07-10-60
North Macedonia	08-04-93
Norway	27-11-45
Oman	07-10-71
Pakistan	30-09-47
Palau	15-12-94
Panama	13-11-45
Papua New Guinea	10-10-75
Paraguay	24-10-45
Peru	31-10-45
Philippines	24-10-45
Poland	24-10-45
Portugal	14-12-55
Qatar	21-09-71
Republic of Korea	17-09-91
Republic of Moldova	02-03-92
Romania	14-12-55
Russian Federation	24-10-45

Rwanda	18-09-62
Saint Kitts and Nevis	23-09-83
Saint Lucia	18-09-79
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	16-09-80
Samoa	15-12-76
San Marino	02-03-92
Sao Tome and Principe	16-09-75
Saudi Arabia	24-10-45
Senegal	28-09-60
Serbia	01-11-00
Seychelles	21-09-76
Sierra Leone	27-09-61
Singapore	21-09-65
Slovakia	19-01-93
Slovenia	22-05-92
Solomon Islands	19-09-78
Somalia	20-09-60
South Africa	07-11-45
South Sudan	14-07-11
Spain	14-12-55
Sri Lanka	14-12-55
Sudan	12-11-56
Suriname	04-12-75
Sweden	19-11-46
Switzerland	10-09-02
Syrian Arab Republic	24-10-45
Tajikistan	02-03-92
Thailand	16-12-46
Timor-Leste	27-09-02

Togo	20-09-60
Tonga	14-09-99
Trinidad and Tobago	18-09-62
Tunisia	12-11-56
Turkey	24-10-45
Turkmenistan	02-03-92
Tuvalu	05-09-00
Uganda	25-10-62
Ukraine	24-10-45
United Arab Emirates	09-12-71
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	24-10-45
United Republic of Tanzania	14-12-61
United States of America	24-10-45
Uruguay	18-12-45
Uzbekistan	02-03-92
Vanuatu	15-09-81
Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	15-11-45
Viet Nam	20-09-77
Yemen	30-09-47
Zambia	01-12-64
Zimbabwe	25-08-80

## Main Organs

The main organs of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat. All were [established in 1945](#) when the UN was founded.





UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

The UN General Assembly Hall during a vote in November 2014 to elect four judges to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## **General Assembly**

The [General Assembly](#) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All [193 Member States](#) of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation. Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and [general debate](#), which many heads of state attend and address. Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority. The General Assembly, each year, elects a [GA President](#) to serve a one-year term of office.

## **Security Council**

The [Security Council](#) has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members ([5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members](#)). Each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a [Presidency](#), which rotates, and changes, every month.

## **Economic and Social Council**

The [Economic and Social Council](#) is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals. It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies. It has [54](#)

[Members](#), elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms. It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on [sustainable development](#).

### **Trusteeship Council**

The [Trusteeship Council](#) was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under [Chapter XIII](#), to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence. By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence. The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994. By a resolution adopted on 25 May 1994, the Council amended its rules of procedure to drop the obligation to meet annually and agreed to meet as occasion required -- by its decision or the decision of its President, or at the request of a majority of its members or the General Assembly or the Security Council.

### **International Court of Justice**

The [International Court of Justice](#) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Its seat is at the Peace Palace in the Hague (Netherlands). It is the only one of the six principal organs of the United Nations not located in New York (United States of America). The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

### **Secretariat**

The [Secretariat](#) comprises the [Secretary-General](#) and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs. The Secretary-General is [chief administrative officer](#) of the Organization, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term. UN staff members are recruited internationally and locally, and work in duty stations and on peacekeeping missions all around the world. But serving the cause of peace in a violent world is a dangerous occupation. Since the founding of the United Nations, hundreds of brave men and women [have given their lives](#) in its service.

### **Funds, Programmes, Specialized Agencies and Others**

The UN system, also known unofficially as the 'UN family', is made up of the UN itself and many programmes, funds, and specialized agencies, all with their own leadership and budget. The programmes and funds are financed through voluntary rather than assessed contributions. The Specialized Agencies are independent international organizations funded by both voluntary and assessed contributions.

### **UNDP**

Headquarters: New York City, USA

The [United Nations Development Programme](#) works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **UNEP**

Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya

The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) established in 1972, is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system. UNEP acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and sustainable development of the global environment.

## **UNFPA**

Headquarters: New York City, USA

The [United Nations Population Fund](#) – UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

## **UN-Habitat**

**Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya**

The mission of the [United Nations Human Settlements Programme](#) is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

## **UNICEF**

Headquarters: New York City, USA

[UNICEF](#) works in 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

## **WFP**

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

The [World Food Programme](#) aims to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. It is the world's largest humanitarian agency. Every year, the programme feeds almost 80 million people in around 75 countries.

## **UN Specialized Agencies**

*The UN specialized agencies are autonomous organizations working with the United Nations. All were brought into relationship with the UN through negotiated agreements. Some existed before the First World War. Some were associated with the League of Nations. Others were created almost simultaneously with the UN. Others were created by the UN to meet emerging needs.*

## **FAO**

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

The [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) leads international efforts to fight hunger. It is both a forum for negotiating agreements between developing and developed countries and a source of technical knowledge and information to aid development.

## **ICAO**

Headquarters: Montreal, Canada

The [International Civil Aviation Organization](#) develops standards for global air transport and assists its 192 Member States in sharing the world's skies to their socio-economic benefit.

## **IFAD**

Headquarters: Rome, Italy

The [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#), since it was created in 1977, has focused exclusively on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to eliminate poverty, hunger and malnutrition; raise their productivity and incomes; and improve the quality of their lives.

## **ILO**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [International Labor Organization](#) promotes international labor rights by formulating international standards on the freedom to associate, collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labor, and equality of opportunity and treatment.

## **IMF**

Headquarters: Washington, DC, USA

The [International Monetary Fund](#) fosters economic growth and employment by providing temporary financial assistance to countries to help ease balance of payments adjustment and technical assistance. The IMF currently has \$28 billion in outstanding loans to 74 nations.

## **IMO**

Headquarters: London, United Kingdom

The [International Maritime Organization](#) has created a comprehensive shipping regulatory framework, addressing safety and environmental concerns, legal matters, technical cooperation, security, and efficiency.

## **ITU**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [International Telecommunication Union](#) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies. It is committed to connecting all the world's

people – wherever they live and whatever their means. Through our work, we protect and support everyone's fundamental right to communicate

## **UNESCO**

Headquarters: Paris, France

The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) focuses on everything from teacher training to helping improve education worldwide to protecting important historical and cultural sites around the world. UNESCO added 28 new World Heritage Sites this year to the list of irreplaceable treasures that will be protected for today's travelers and future generations.

## **UNIDO**

Headquarters: Vienna, Austria

The [United Nations Industrial Development Organization](#) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.

## **UNWTO**

Headquarters: Madrid, Spain

The [World Tourism Organization](#) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

## **UPU**

Headquarters: Bern, Switzerland

The [Universal Postal Union](#) is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players. It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.

## **WHO**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [World Health Organization](#) is the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations system. The objective of WHO is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health, as defined in the WHO Constitution, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

## **WIPO**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [World Intellectual Property Organization](#) protects intellectual property throughout the world through 23 international treaties.

## **WMO**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [World Meteorological Organization](#) facilitates the free international exchange of meteorological data and information and the furtherance of its use in aviation, shipping, security, and agriculture, among other things.

## **World Bank**

Headquarters: Washington, DC, USA

The [World Bank](#) focuses on poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards worldwide by providing low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, and communications, among other things. The World Bank works in over 100 countries.

- [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#) (IBRD)
- [International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes](#) (ICSID)\*
- [International Development Association](#) (IDA)
- [International Finance Corporation](#) (IFC)
- [Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency](#) (MIGA)\*

*\* International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) are not specialized agencies in accordance with Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter, but are part of the World Bank Group.*

## **Other Entities and Bodies**

### **UNAIDS**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS](#) (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

### **UNHCR**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees](#) – UNHCR protects refugees worldwide and facilitates their return home or resettlement.

### **UNIDIR**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research](#) is a voluntarily funded autonomous institute within the United Nations. An impartial actor, the Institute generates ideas and promotes action on disarmament and security. UNIDIR brings together states, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia to work together—internationally, regionally and locally—to build and implement creative solutions that will benefit all states and peoples.

## **UNITAR**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

An autonomous UN body established in 1963, the [United Nations Institute for Training and Research](#) is a training arm of the United Nations System, and has the mandate to enhance the effectiveness of the UN through diplomatic training, and to increase the impact of national actions through public awareness-raising, education and training of public policy officials.

## **UNOPS**

Headquarters: Copenhagen, Denmark

The mission of the [United Nations Office for Project Services](#) is to help people build better lives and help countries achieve peace and sustainable development. UNOPS helps the UN, governments and other partners to manage projects, and deliver sustainable infrastructure and procurement in an efficient way.

## **UNRWA**

Headquarters: Amman, Jordan

The [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees](#) has contributed to the welfare and human development of [four generations of Palestine refugees](#). Its services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict. It reports only to the UN General Assembly.

## **UNSSC**

Headquarters: Turin, Italy

The [United Nations System Staff College](#) is the learning organization of the United Nations system. It designs and delivers learning programmes for staff of the UN system and its partners. It helps the United Nations become more effective by fostering a common leadership and management culture across the system.

## **UN Women**

Headquarters: New York City, USA

[UN Women](#) merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focus exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment.

## Related Organizations

### **CTBTO**

**Headquarters: Vienna, Austria**

The [Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization](#) promotes the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (which is not yet in force) and the build-up of the verification regime so that it is operational when the Treaty enters into force.

### **IAEA**

Headquarters: Vienna, Austria

The [International Atomic Energy Agency](#), is the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

### **IOM**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [International Organization for Migration](#) works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

### **OPCW**

Headquarters: The Hague, Netherlands

The [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#) is the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997. OPCW Member States work together to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

### **UNFCCC**

Headquarters: Bonn, Germany

The [UNFCCC Secretariat](#) (UN Climate Change) was established in 1992 when countries adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). With the subsequent adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 and the Paris Agreement in 2015, Parties to these three agreements have progressively reaffirmed the Secretariat's role as the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change.

### **WTO**

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [World Trade Organization](#) is a forum for governments to negotiate trade agreements, and a place where member governments try to sort out the trade problems they face with each other.



## ITC

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

The [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) is the only development agency that is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Established in 1964, the ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

## History of the United Nations



### 1 January 1942 || The name "United Nations" is coined

The name "United Nations", coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt 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.

## 24 October 1945 || The United Nations officially comes into existence

In 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the [United Nations Conference on International Organization](#) to draw up the [United Nations Charter](#). Those delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States at [Dumbarton Oaks](#), United States 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 by a majority of other signatories. [United Nations Day](#) is celebrated on 24 October each year.

## Preceding Years - Forerunners of the United Nations

### 1865 || 1874

States first established international organizations to cooperate on specific matters. The [International Telecommunication Union](#) was founded in 1865 as the International Telegraph Union, and the [Universal Postal Union](#) was established in 1874. Both are now United Nations [specialized agencies](#).

### 1899 || 1902

In 1899, the International Peace Conference was held in The Hague to elaborate instruments for settling crises peacefully, preventing wars and codifying rules of warfare. It adopted the Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes and established the [Permanent Court of Arbitration](#), which began work in 1902.

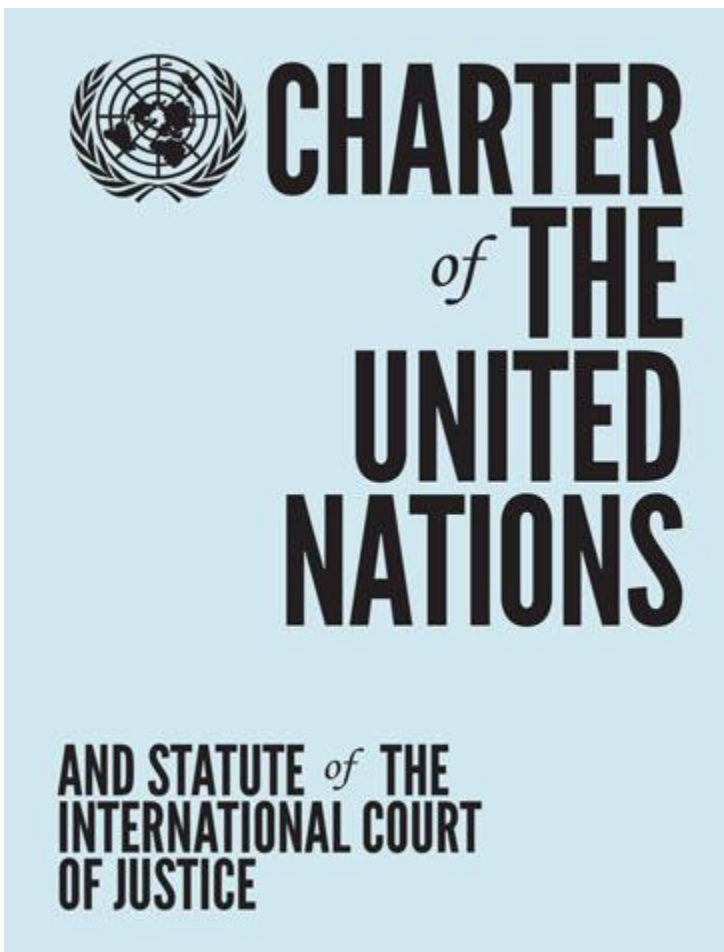
### 1919

The forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations, an organization conceived in similar circumstances during the first World War, and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security." The [International Labour Organization](#) was also created under the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League. The League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War.

[Logo and Flag](#)



**Charter of the United Nations**



## The UN Charter

The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24 October 1945. The Statute of the International Court of Justice is an integral part of the Charter. Visit the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library's [collection of translations of the UN Charter](#).

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This film, set against the stirring words of the Preamble of the United Nations Charter, premiered to an audience of Heads of States from around the world. Fanfare incorporates six

languages and incorporates cutting-edge drone footage and breathtaking aerial photography with an inspiring original symphonic score.

## UN Logo and Flag

The logo and flag of the UN have become its symbols as it carries out its work on the world stage. They have the practical effect of identifying the United Nations in areas of trouble and conflict to any and all parties concerned. They are also aspirational symbols, for they speak to the hopes and dreams of people the world over, for peace and unity.



UN Photo/John Isaac

The flag of the United Nations, with its white emblem on a light blue field, flies from a pole in front of UN Headquarters in New York.

### The Design

The original UN logo was created by a team of designers during the [United Nations Conference on International Organization](#) in 1945. The design team was led by Oliver Lincoln Lundquist.

### The United Nations Emblem

The design is "a map of the world representing an azimuthal equidistant projection centred on the North Pole, inscribed in a wreath consisting of crossed conventionalized branches of the olive tree, in gold on a field of smoke-blue with all water areas in white. The projection of the map extends to 60 degrees south latitude, and includes five concentric circles" (original description of the emblem).

### The United Nations Flag

The [official emblem](#) of the United Nations in white, centered on a light blue background.

### Approval

The UN logo was approved on 7 December 1946.

### **Its Use**

The UN logo has been incorporated into the logos of several [UN Family members](#). The logo is also used on United Nations stamps.

## **Official Languages**

There are six official languages of the UN. These are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The correct interpretation and translation of these six languages, in both spoken and written form, is very important to the work of the Organization, because this enables clear and concise communication on issues of global importance.



UN Photo/Sarah Fretwell

View of the Spanish interpreters' booth during special event in 2013 entitled “Girls Speak Out: Showcasing Girl Activists from around the World”, co-organized by the Permanent Missions of Canada, Peru and Turkey in celebration of the second annual International Day of the Girl Child.

### **Interpretation and Translation**

A delegate may speak in any official UN language. The speech is interpreted simultaneously into the other official languages of the UN. At times, a delegate may choose to make a statement using a non-official language. In such cases, the delegation must provide either an interpretation or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages. Most UN documents are issued in all six official languages, requiring translation from the original document.

### **Multilingualism and the UN**

[Multilingualism](#) enables communication between the UN's linguistically and culturally diverse Member States within the meeting rooms and halls of the UN. By promoting tolerance, multilingualism also ensures increased participation of all Member States in the

Organization's work, as well as greater effectiveness, better outcomes and more involvement. In order to eliminate the 'disparity between the use of English and the use of the other five official languages' and 'to ensure the full and equitable treatment of all the official languages,' as mandated by the UN General Assembly, the [Department of Global Communications](#) has set [minimum standards for UN web multilingualism](#).

### **History of the UN's Official Languages**

The [history of the UN's official languages](#), presented by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, gives the history of when each of the six official languages of the United Nations became official, beginning in 1946.

### **Universities Outreach Programme**

The [Universities Outreach Programme](#) was established by the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), in order to address the language recruitment and succession planning goals of the United Nations, by giving guidance on language careers at the UN to students. It has information on the different language careers available at the UN, schools that train students for these careers, and other information.

### **The UN as Language Employer**

The United Nations is one of the world's largest employers of language professionals. Several hundred language professionals work for the [Department for General Assembly and Conference Management \(DGACM\)](#) in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. Many more are hired by the regional commissions of the United Nations in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut and Santiago. At the United Nations, the term "language professional" applies to a range of specialized and interrelated occupations, mainly interpreters, translators, editors, verbatim reporters, terminologists, reference assistants, copy preparers and proofreaders.

### **Language Days at the UN**

The [Department of Global Communications](#) has established language days for each of the UN's six official languages. The purpose of the UN's language days is to celebrate multilingualism and [cultural diversity](#) as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization. Under the initiative, UN duty stations around the world celebrate six separate days, each dedicated to one of the Organization's six official languages. Language Days at the UN aim to entertain as well as inform, with the goal of increasing awareness and respect for the history, culture and achievements of each of the six working languages among the UN community. The days are as follows:

- [Arabic \(18 December\)](#)
- [Chinese \(20 April\)](#)
- [English \(23 April\)](#)
- [Spanish \(23 April\)](#)
- [French \(20 March\)](#)
- [Russian \(6 June\)](#)

### **Multilingualism and the UN**

## **United Nations and the Nobel Peace Prize**

The will Alfred Nobel made in 1895 was inspired by belief in the community of man. The Peace Prize was to be awarded to the person who had done most for "fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses".



UN Photo/John Isaac

Photographic reproduction of the Nobel Peace Medal.

In 70 years, the United Nations, its specialised agencies, related agencies, funds, programmes and staff were awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize eleven times. One agency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) received the famous prize in both 1954 and 1981.

Two Secretaries-General, Kofi Annan and Dag Hammarskjöld, were also honoured for their work by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. After being awarded the prize jointly with the world body, Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2001 told UN staff he hoped that winning the prize "will urge us forward and encourage all of us to tackle our tasks with even greater determination".

"For one hundred years, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has sought to strengthen organized cooperation between states. The end of the cold war has at last made it possible for the U.N. to perform more fully the part it was originally intended to play. Today the organization is at the forefront of efforts to achieve peace and security in the world, and of the international mobilization aimed at meeting the world's economic, social and environmental challenges....[The] Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes in its centenary year to proclaim that the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

The Norwegian Nobel Institute

Oslo, 12 October, 2001



## UN Nobel Laureates



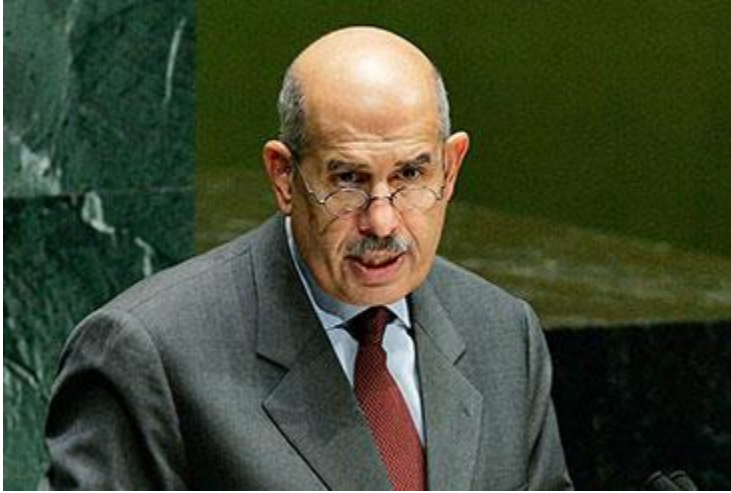
### 2013 - Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

The Nobel Peace Prize 2013 was awarded to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons "for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons".



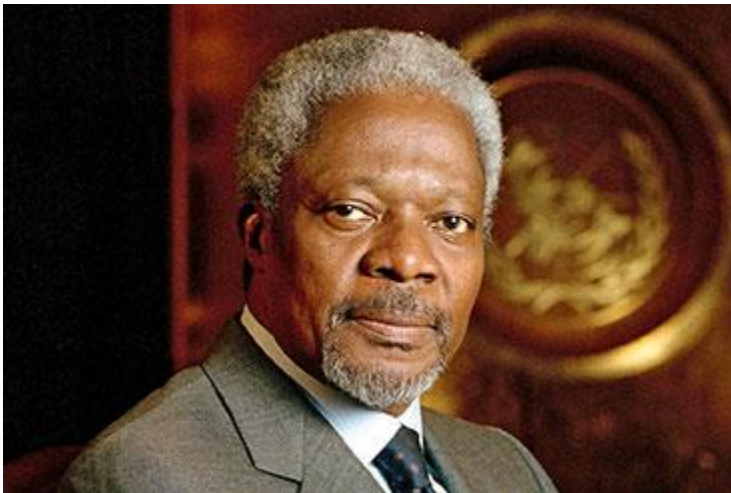
### 2007 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr. have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."



### **2005 - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Mohamed ElBaradei**

The Nobel Committee selected the IAEA and its Director General Mohamed ElBaradei as the recipients of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize “for their efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way”.



### **2001 - United Nations and Kofi Annan**

The United Nations and its Secretary-General Kofi Annan have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for their work for a better organized and more peaceful world”.



### 1988 - United Nations Peacekeeping Forces

The Nobel Committee awarded the prize because “The peacekeeping forces of the United Nations have, under extremely difficult conditions, contributed to reducing tensions where an armistice has been negotiated but a peace treaty has yet to be established”.



### 1981 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

“The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees has, in the opinion of the [Nobel] Committee, carried out work of major importance to assist refugees, despite the many political difficulties with which it has had to contend.”



### 1969 - The International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization was awarded the Peace Prize since it has done most to promote fraternity among nations by ensuring social justice, the Nobel Committee said. "Beneath the foundation stone of the ILO's main office in Geneva lies a document on which is written: 'Si vis pacem, cole justitiam. If you desire peace, cultivate justice'."



### 1965 - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Upon giving the prize, the Nobel Committee declared that "everyone has understood the language of UNICEF, and even the most reluctant person is bound to admit that in action UNICEF has proved that compassion knows no national boundaries".



### 1961 - Dag Hammarskjöld (awarded posthumously)

“Dag Hammarskjöld was exposed to criticism and violent, unrestrained attacks” explained the Nobel Committee “but he never departed from the path he had chosen from the very first: the path that was to result in the UN's developing into an effective and constructive international organization.”



### 1954 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR "shows us that the unfortunate foreigner is one of us; it teaches us to understand that sympathy with other human beings, even if they are separated from us by national frontiers, is the foundation upon which a lasting peace must be built”.



**1950 - Ralph Bunche, United Nations mediator in Palestine during the 1948 conflict between the Arabs and Jews**

Ralph Bunche received the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize for his late 1940s work as a United Nations mediator in the Palestine conflict. He called himself 'an incurable optimist'. Bunche was the first African American and person of color to be so honored in the history of the prize.

## List of Countries, Capitals, Currencies, and Languages (in English)

Country	Capital(s)	Currency	Primary Language(s)
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Dari Persian; Pashto
Albania	Tirane	Lek	Albanian
Algeria	Algiers	Algerian Dinar	Arabic; Tamazight; French
Andorra	Andorra la Vella	Euro	Catalan
Angola	Luanda	Kwanza	Portuguese
Antigua and Barbuda	Saint John's	East Caribbean Dollar	English
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Argentine Peso	Spanish
Armenia	Yerevan	Dram	Armenian
Australia	Canberra	Australian Dollar	English
Austria	Vienna	Euro	German
Azerbaijan	Baku	Manat	Azerbaijani
The Bahamas	Nassau	Bahamian Dollar	English
Bahrain	Manama	Bahraini Dinar	Arabic
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Bangla
Barbados	Bridgetown	Barbadian Dollar	English
Belarus	Minsk	Belarusian Ruble	Belarusian; Russian
Belgium	Brussels	Euro	Dutch; French; German
Belize	Belmopan	Belize Dollar	English
Benin	Porto-Novo	West African CFA Franc	French
Bhutan	Thimphu	Ngultrum	Dzongkha
Bolivia	La Paz; Sucre	Boliviano	Spanish; Quechua; Aymara
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo	Convertible Mark	Bosnian; Croatian; Serbian
Botswana	Gaborone	Pula	English; Tswana
Brazil	Brasilia	Real	Portuguese
Brunei	Bandar Seri Begawan	Brunei Dollar	Malay
Bulgaria	Sofia	Lev	Bulgarian
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	West African CFA Franc	French
Burundi	Bujumbura	Burundi Franc	Kirundi; French
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Riel	Khmer
Cameroon	Yaounde	Central African CFA Franc	French; English
Canada	Ottawa	Canadian Dollar	English; French
Cape Verde	Praia	Cape Verdean Escudo	Portuguese
Central African Republic	Bangui	Central African CFA Franc	Sango; French
Chad	N'Djamena	Central African CFA Franc	French; Arabic
Chile	Santiago	Chilean Peso	Spanish
China	Beijing	Chinese Yuan	Mandarin
Colombia	Bogota	Colombian Peso	Spanish
Comoros	Moroni	Comorian Franc	Comorian; Arabic; French
Democratic Republic Of the Congo	Kinshasa	Congolese Franc	French
Republic of the Congo	Brazzaville	Central African CFA Franc	French
Costa Rica	San Jose	Colon	Spanish
Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	Yamoussoukro; Abidjan	West African CFA Franc	French
Croatia	Zagreb	Croatian	Kuna
Cuba	Havana	Cuban Peso	Spanish
Cyprus	Nicosia	Euro	Greek; Turkish
Czech Republic	Prague	Czech Koruna	Czech; Slovak
Denmark	Copenhagen	Danish Krone	Danish

**List of Countries, Capitals, Currencies, and Languages (in English)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Capital(s)</b>	<b>Currency</b>	<b>Primary Language(s)</b>
Djibouti	Djibouti	Djiboutian Franc	Arabic; French
Dominica	Rosesau	East Caribbean Dollar	English; French; Antillean Creole
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	Dominican Peso	Spanish
East Timor (Timor-Leste)	Dilli	United States Dollar	Tetum; Portuguese; Indonesian
Ecuador	Quito	United States Dollar	Spanish
Egypt	Cairo	Egyptian Pound	Arabic
El Salvador	San Salvador	United States Dollar	Spanish
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo	Central African CFA Franc	Spanish; French; Portuguese
Eritrea	Asmara	Nakfa	Arabic; Tigrinya; English
Estonia	Tallinn	Estonian Kroon; Euro	Estonian
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Birr	Amharic
Fiji	Suva	Fijian Dollar	English; Bau Fijian; Hindi
Finland	Helsinki	Euro	Finnish; Swedish
France	Paris	Euro; CFP Franc	French
Gabon	Libreville	Central African CFA Franc	French
The Gambia	Banjul	Dalasi	English
Georgia	Tbilisi	Lari	Georgian
Germany	Berlin	Euro	German
Ghana	Accra	Ghanaian Cedi	English
Greece	Athens	Euro	Greek
Grenada	St. George's	East Caribbean Dollar	English; Patois
Guatemala	Guatemala City	Quetzal	Spanish
Guinea	Conakry	Guinean Franc	French
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	West African CFA Franc	Portuguese
Guyana	Georgetown	Guyanese Dollar	English
Haiti	Port-au-Prince	Gourde	Haitian Creole; French
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	Lempira	Spanish
Hungary	Budapest	Forint	Hungarian
Iceland	Reykjavik	Icelandic Krona	Icelandic
India	New Delhi	Indian Rupee	Hindi; English
Indonesia	Jakarta	Rupiah	Indonesian
Iran	Tehran	Rial	Persian
Iraq	Baghdad	Iraqi Dinar	Arabic; Kurdish
Republic of Ireland	Dublin	Euro	English; Irish
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Hebrew; Arabic
Italy	Rome	Euro	Italian
Jamaica	Kingston	Jamaican Dollar	English
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Japanese
Jordan	Amman	Jordanian Dinar	Arabic
Kazakhstan	Astana	Tenge	Kazakh; Russian
Kenya	Nairobi	Kenyan Shilling	Swahili; English
Kiribati	Tarawa Atoll	Kiribati Dollar	English; Gilbertese
North Korea	Pyongyang	North Korean Won	Korean
South Korea	Seoul	South Korean Won	Korean
Kosovo	Pristina	Euro	Albanian; Serbian
Kuwait	Kuwait City	Kuwaiti Dollar	Arabic; English
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	Som	Kyrgyz; Russian



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Country	Capital(s)	Currency	Primary Language(s)
Laos	Vientiane	Kip	Lao (Laotian)
Latvia	Riga	Lats	Latvian
Lebanon	Beirut	Lebanese Pound	Arabic; French
Lesotho	Maseru	Loti	Sesotho; English
Liberia	Monrovia	Liberian Dollar	English
Libya	Tripoli	Libyan Dinar	Arabic
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	Swiss Franc	German
Lithuania	Vilnius	Lithuanian Litas	Lithuanian
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Euro	German; French; Luxembourgish
Macedonia	Skopje	Macedonian Denar	Macedonian
Madagascar	Antananarivo	Malagasy Ariary	Malagasy; French; English
Malawi	Lilongwe	Malawi Kwacha	English
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	Ringgit	Malay
Maldives	Male	Maldivian Rufiyaa	Dhivehi
Mali	Bamako	West African CFA Franc	French
Malta	Valletta	Euro	Maltese; English
Marshall Islands	Majuro	United States Dollar	Marshallese; English
Mauritania	Nouakchott	Ouguiya	Arabic
Mauritius	Port Louis	Mauritian Rupee	English
Mexico	Mexico City	Mexican Peso	Spanish
Federal States of Micronesia	Palikir	United States Dollar	English
Moldova	Chisinau	Moldovan Leu	Moldovan (Romanian)
Monaco	Monaco	Euro	French; Italian; English
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	Togrog	Mongolian
Montenegro	Podgorica	Euro	Montenegrin
Morocco	Rabat	Moroccan Dirham	Arabic
Mozambique	Maputo	Mozambican Metical	Portuguese
Myanmar (Burma)	Nypyidaw	Kyat	Burmese
Namibia	Windhoek	Namibian Dollar	English; Afrikaans; German
Nauru	Yaren	Australian Dollar	English; Nauran
Nepal	Kathmandu	Nepalese Rupee	Nepali
Netherlands	Amsterdam; The Hague	Euro	Dutch
New Zealand	Wellington	New Zealand Dollar	English
Nicaragua	Managua	Cordoba	Spanish
Niger	Niamey	West African CFA Franc	French
Nigeria	Abuja	Naira	English
Norway	Oslo	Norwegian Krone	Norwegian
Oman	Muscat	Omani Rial	Arabic
Pakistan	Islamabad	Pakistani Rupee	Urdu; English
Palau	Melekeok	United States Dollar	English; Palauan
Panama	Panama City	Balboa	Spanish
Papa New Guinea	Port Moresby	Papa New Guinean Kina	English; Tok Pisin; Hiri Motu
Paraguay	Asuncion	Guarani	Spanish; Guarani
Peru	Lima	Nuevo Sol	Spanish
Phillipines	Manila	Phillipine Peso	Filipino; English
Poland	Warsaw	Złoty	Polish
Portugal	Lisbon	Euro	Portuguese

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Country	Capital(s)	Currency	Primary Language(s)
Qatar	Doha	Qatari Riyal	Arabic
Romania	Bucharest	Romanian Rupee	Romanian
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Russian
Rwanda	Kigali	Rwandan Franc	Kinyarwanda; French; English
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Basseterre	East Caribbean Dollar	English
Saint Lucia	Castries	East Caribbean Dollar	English; French
Saint Vincent and The Grenadines	Kingstown	East Caribbean Dollar	English
Samoa	Apia	Tala	Samoa; English
San Marino	San Marino	Euro	Italian
Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome	Dobra	Portuguese
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Saudi Riyal	Arabic
Senegal	Dakar	West African CFA Franc	French
Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian Dinar	Serbian
Seychelles	Victoria	Seychoellois Rupee	Seychellois Creole; French; English
Sierra Leone	Freetown	Leone	Krio; English
Singapore	Singapore	Singapore Dollar	English; Malay; Mandarin Chinese
Slovakia	Bratislava	Euro	Slovak
Slovenia	Ljubljana	Euro	Slovene
Solomon Islands	Honiara	Solomon Islands Dollar	Solomons Pijin
Somalia	Mogadishu	Somali Shilling	Somali; Arabic
South Africa	Pretoria; Cape Town; Bloemfontein	Rand	Zulu; Xhosa; Afrikaans
Spain	Madrid	Euro	Spanish
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Sri Lankan Rupee	Sinhala; Tamil
Sudan	Khartoum	Sudanese Pound	Arabic; English
Suriname	Paramaribo	Surinamese Dollar	Dutch
Swaziland	Mbabane	Lilangeni	English; SiSwati
Sweden	Stockholm	Swedish Krona	Swedish
Switzerland	Berne	Swiss Franc	German; French; Italian
Syria	Damascus	Syrian Pound	Arabic
Taiwan	Taipei	New Taiwan Dollar	Mandarin
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	Somoni	Tajik; Russian
Tanzania	Dar es Salaam; Dodoma	Tanzanian Schilling	Swahili
Thailand	Bangkok	Thai Baht	Thai
Togo	Lome	West African CFA Franc	French
Tonga	Nuku'alofa	Pa'anga	Tongan; English
Trinidad and Tobago	Port-of-Spain	Trinidad and Tobago Dollar	English
Tunisia	Tunis	Tunisian Dinar	Tunisian; French
Turkey	Ankara	Turkish Lira	Turkish
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	Turkmen New Manat	Turkmen; Russian
Tuvalu	Vaiaku	Tuvaluan Dollar	Tuvaluan; English
Uganda	Kampala	Ugandan Shilling	Swahili; English
Ukraine	Kiev	Hryvnia	Ukranian; Russian
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	Dirham	Arabic
United Kingdom	London	Pound Sterling	English

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Country	Capital(s)	Currency	Primary Language(s)
United States of America	Washington D.C.	United States Dollar	English; Spanish
Uruguay	Montevideo	Uruguayan Peso	Spanish
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	Uzbekistan Som	Uzbek; Russian
Vanuatu	Port-Vila	Vanuatu Vatu	Bislama; English; French
Vatican City	Vatican City	Euro	Latin; Italian
Venezuela	Caracas	Bolivar Fuerte	Spanish
Vietnam	Hanoi	Dong	Vietnamese
Yemen	Sanaa	Yemeni Rial	Arabic
Zambia	Lusaka	Zambian Kwacha	English
Zimbabwe	Harare	United States Dollar	English