

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Its function

The General Assembly is the plenary organ of the United Nations and comprises representatives of all member countries.

The Assembly's formal functions are:

To consider and make recommendations on the principles of international co-operation in the maintenance of peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments;

To discuss any problem affecting peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, to make recommendations on it;

To discuss and, with the same exception, to make recommendations on any question within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations;

To initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political co-operation, the development of international law and its codification, the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, and international collaboration in economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields;

To receive and consider reports from the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations;

To make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situations regardless of origin, which might impair friendly relations among nations;

To supervise, through the Trusteeship Council, the execution of the trusteeship agreements for all areas not designated as strategic;

To elect the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council, those members of the Trusteeship Council that are elected; to take part with the Security Council in the election of judges of the International Court of Justice; and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, to appoint the Secretary-General; to elect members of the Economic and Social Council. At present, the Council comprises 54 members.

### The President of the General Assembly

The General Assembly is presided over by the President, who is elected at the start of each session and holds office until its close. His general powers are to declare the opening and closing of each plenary meeting of the session, direct discussions in plenary meeting, ensure observance of the rules, accord the right to speak, put questions and announce decisions. In the election of the President, due regard is had for equitable geographical rotation of the office.\*

### The Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly

The General Assembly also elects seventeen Vice-Presidents. If the President finds it necessary to be absent during the whole or part of a meeting, he appoints one of the Vice-Presidents to take his place.

In 1963, the General Assembly decided that the Vice-Presidents would be elected according to the following pattern:

- (a) Seven from the Afro-Asian group
- (b) One from the East European group
- (c) Three from the Latin American group
- (d) Two from the Western European and Other Group (which includes Canada)
- (e) Five from the permanent members of the Security Council.

\* The election of the President has the effect of reducing by one the number of Vice-Presidents from the region from which the President is elected.