

"This trend toward universality is unquestionably beneficial – indeed it is essential – to an organization one of whose primary functions is to reflect the state of the world as it is and to harmonize the policies of nations. This main difference between the United Nations and the regional pacts, such as NATO or the Warsaw Pact, is sometimes overlooked by the United Nations' critics. The United Nations exists to reflect the diversity of the world as it is and to try to bring order, reason and the motivation of common interest into that diversity. If it reflected only one side or the other of the world's problems, it would no longer be able to perform its true function."

The principle of universality is not, however, universally accepted; as will be seen later, there have been proposals to expel countries pursuing policies – domestic or foreign – that have been widely condemned by other member states.

The number of original members of the United Nations when the organization was formed in 1945 was 51. Over the next five years there was a gradual increase, and by 1950 the membership stood at 60. At that point the "Cold War" imposed a "freeze" on new admissions that lasted until 1955, when Canada took the initiative in sponsoring a resolution aimed at breaking the membership deadlock. In the past, the applications of 14 countries favoured by the non-Communist members had all been vetoed by the Soviet Union, while the seven sponsored by the U.S.S.R. had not been able to obtain the necessary affirmative votes of seven members of the Security Council. The essence of the Canadian proposal was that all outstanding applicants other than the divided states of Korea and Vietnam should be admitted simultaneously. Since action on the admission of new members had to commence in the Security Council, the Canadian delegation, with 27 co-sponsors, introduced a draft resolution requesting the Security Council to consider the pending applications of all the 18 countries where no problem of unification existed.