

of the Security Council. Decisions of the other organs are recommendations only and countries may choose to accept or reject them.

The Security Council is made up of 15 members; five permanent members (China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States) and ten elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. The ten are elected according to a pattern that ensures five from Asia and Africa, one from Eastern Europe, two from Latin America and two from Western Europe and Other States. Members of the United Nations not currently members of the Security Council and non-members, if they are parties to a dispute or issue being discussed by the Council, may participate in discussions but may not vote.

Each member of the Security Council has one vote. Decisions on procedural matters are made by an affirmative vote of at least 9 of the 15 members. If a matter is substantive in nature, then the nine votes must include the concurring votes of all five permanent members. This is the rule of "great power unanimity" often referred to as the "veto" power. If a permanent member does not support a decision but does not wish to block through a veto, it may abstain. All five permanent members have exercised the veto right at one time or another.

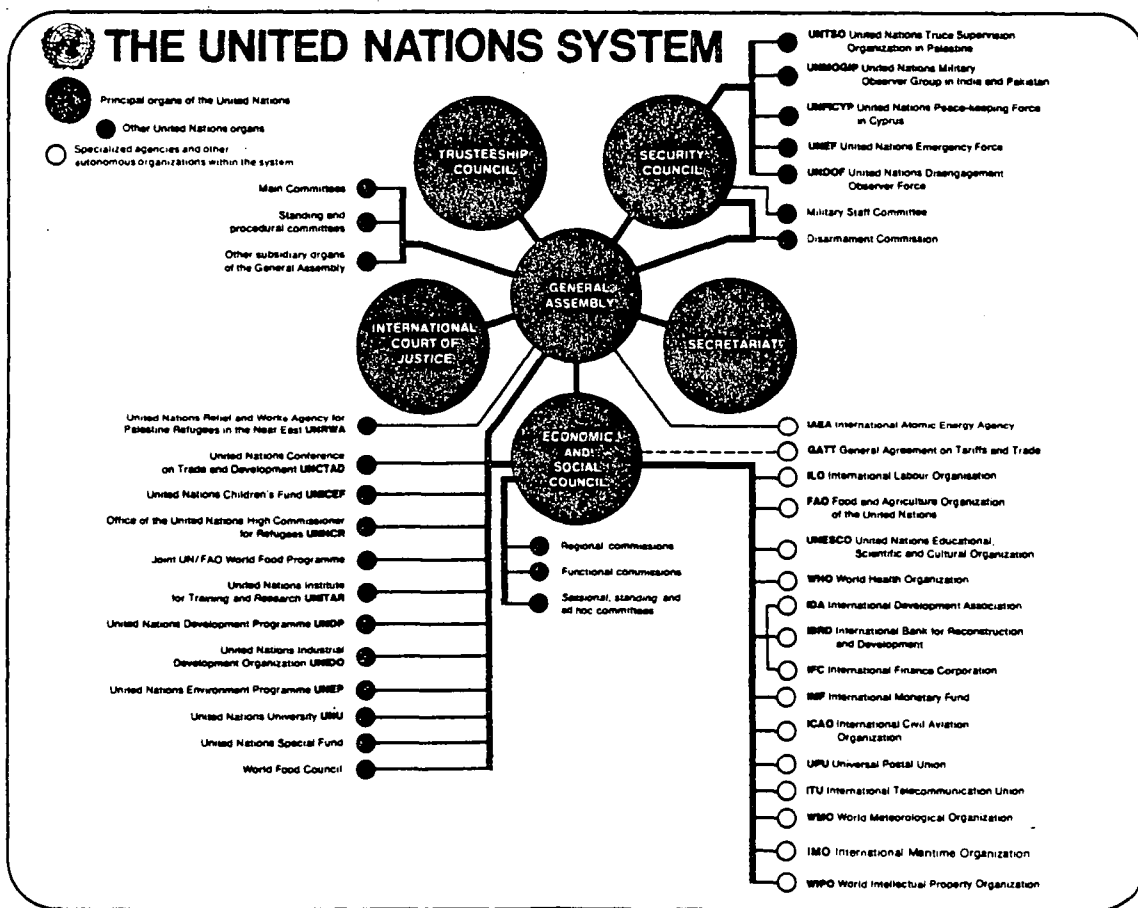
The presidency of the Council is held for one month at a time, in turn, by Member States in the English alphabetical order of their names. Because the Council is organized so as to be able to function continuously, a representative of each Member State on the Council must be present at all times at United Nations Headquarters. Canada has served four terms as a member of the Security Council; in 1948-49, 1958-59, 1967-68 and 1977-79.

### 3. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Under the Charter, the United Nations is charged with promoting far-reaching economic and social objectives. These include:

- a) higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b) solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems, and international cultural and educational co-operation;
- c) universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>2</sup>

Responsibility for these various functions is vested in the General Assembly, and it in turn delegates most of the initial authority to ECOSOC. The council in its turn is assisted by a network of commissions and



Source: DPI, United Nations — Basic Facts About The United Nations, 1980.