

Institutionally, the United Nations was built on an infrastructure created during the period of the League of Nations. The International Labour Organization was maintained as a Specialized Agency of the United Nations and the Permanent Court at The Hague was re-established as the International Court of Justice. Three Specialized Agencies – the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – grew out of the corresponding parts of the League Secretariat, while the mandates system of the League became the trusteeship system of the United Nations. Many other activities, such as the control of narcotic drugs and relief and rehabilitation of refugees, also passed from the old organization to the new. In the economic sphere, plans were laid for the eventual establishment of the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and an international trade organization. The latter never came into being, but most of its proposed functions are being performed by other bodies. Of special interest to Canada is the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which was brought into being by a convention signed at Chicago in 1944 and which established its headquarters in Montreal.

In practice the Charter has proved to be a much more flexible instrument than the Covenant. The Security Council, despite the veto provision (which will be described later), has wider discretion than the League Council in deciding what constitutes a threat to or breach of the peace or an act of aggression. Through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Specialized Agencies, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and their related bodies, there has been wider and better-organized international economic co-operation than was ever dreamt of under the League. Moreover, the system created in 1945 has been so supple, so adaptable, that countries that have emerged from colonialism to become independent since the United Nations was established have been able to use it to promote interests