

Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. In selecting judges, care is taken that the principal legal systems of the world are represented. The Court settles legal disputes between member states and renders advisory opinions for the UN and its agencies. Only member states may refer issues to the Court. A state can refuse to submit to its jurisdiction (except where otherwise expressly provided by treaty), but if it accepts, it is obliged to comply with the decision rendered.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General and provides the services that keep the UN and the programs of its five main bodies running on a day-to-day basis (those organs being the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice). The Secretariat operates out of UN headquarters in New York, as well as offices in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna.

In 1999, the Secretariat employed about 8700 civil servants—4700 of them in New York—from 160 countries. Their duties include administering peacekeeping operations, organizing international conferences, studying world economic and social trends, preparing studies on such subjects as human rights, disarmament and development, providing simultaneous interpretation and translation services, and providing information on the United Nations to media the world over.

Budget and personnel

The UN budget for the year 1999 is US\$1.25 billion. This amount covers the operations of the Secretariat for the United Nations system in New York, Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, as well as the five regional economic commissions. In addition, there is the UN funds and programmes budget, which comes to nearly US\$5 billion for the year 1999. Added to this are the budgets of specialized agencies such as UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization, bringing total operating expenditures for the entire United Nations system to over US\$18 billion a year.

The Secretariat and the various components of the United Nations system are funded through member states' dues and through donations from the private sector, other national and multilateral agencies, and individuals. Member states' dues are set according to total gross national product (GNP), adjusted for a series of factors including per capita income and population. For the year 1999, Canada's share was set at 2.754 percent (US\$28.6 million).

Including Secretariat staff, UN personnel in 1999 numbered 64,700 people working in 29 agencies, institutions and programs of the UN system throughout the world.