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22nd EDITION

CHRONICLE

YEAR BOOK 2024

A Compendium on India

Cover Story

India on the Move

India at a Glance

World at a Glance

Burning Issues
Society, Governance, Economy, Science & Technology, Environment & International Relations

Govt. Initiatives | **Current GK** | **India Update**

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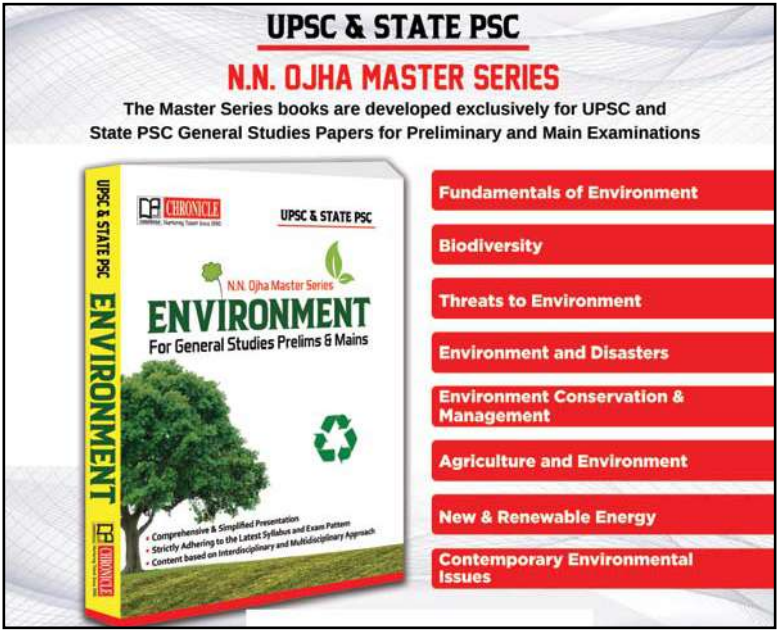

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India on the Move

N.N. Ojha
Editor, Civil Services Chronicle

As India marks 75 years of independence, the nation stands at a pivotal juncture, symbolizing not just the triumphs of the past but also the promise of a transformative future. The 21st century is unequivocally India's century, marked by a resolute stride into an era of unwavering confidence in its capabilities. Presently the 5th largest economy globally, India is destined to ascend to the rank of the world's 3rd largest economy by 2027, with its GDP projected to surpass US$ 5 trillion, according to IMF estimates.

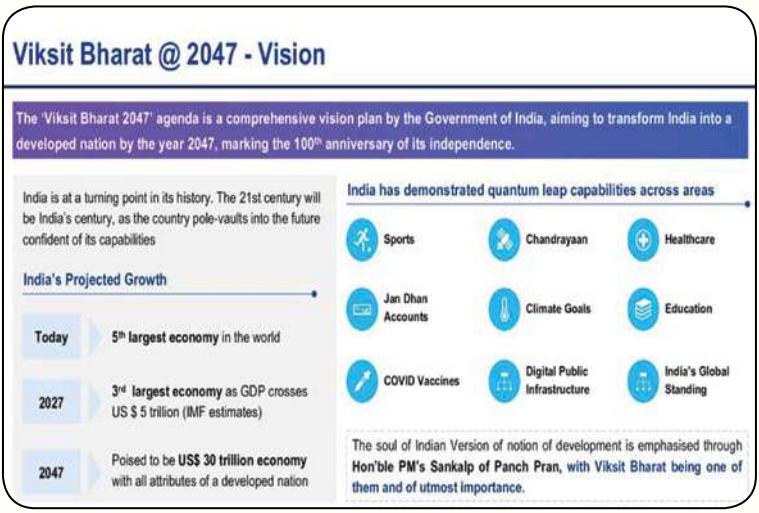
Looking ahead to the next 25 years, aptly termed the "Amrit Kaal," India envisions a profound metamorphosis. The nation is fervently gearing up for a metamorphic journey, culminating in the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047. India aspires to evolve into a US$ 30 trillion economy by 2047, adorned with the hallmarks of a developed nation. This transcendence encompasses multifaceted growth and development across sectors, encapsulating the dreams and aspirations of the 1.4 billion-strong populace.

In this transformative journey, the focus transcends mere economic indicators. It delves into comprehensive nation-building, embracing inclusivity, sustainability, and innovation as core principles. As India navigates through the Amrit Kaal, the trajectory is set not just for economic milestones but also an indelible imprint on the global stage, reaffirming India's standing as a beacon of progress, resilience and visionary leadership.

Amrit Kaal
Realising the Vision of Viksit Bharat@2047

Hon'ble Prime Minister unveiled the visionary concept of Amrit Kaal or 'The Era of Elixir' on India's 75th Independence Day, setting the stage for the nation's aspirations in the coming decades. This epochal period, drawn from Vedic astrology, signifies an auspicious juncture, akin to the opening of gates to greater pleasure for humans, angels, and other creatures. As per Vedic traditions, Amrit Kaal is the most propitious time to commence any new endeavour.

In alignment with this transformative vision, the Union Budget for 2023-2024, the inaugural budget in the Amrit Kaal, delineated a path for India to evolve into a technology-driven and knowledge-based economy. The Saptarishi principles laid out in the Budget encompass Inclusive Development, Reaching the Last Mile, Infrastructure and Investment, Unleashing the Potential, Green Growth, Youth Power, and Financial Sector, reaffirming the commitment to holistic and sustainable development. The Budget envisages robust public finances, a resilient financial sector and underscores the significance of Jan Bhagidari through the principles of Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayas.



Global Debt Distress

The global debt burden retreated for the second year in a row, even though it remains above its already-high pre-pandemic level, according to the latest update of International Monetary Fund's Global Debt Database.

The total debt stood at 238 percent of global gross domestic product in 2022. In US dollar terms, debt amounted to $235 trillion, or $200 billion above its level in 2021.

Addressing the growing sovereign debt distress globally was a priority for India's G20 presidency. Globally, at least 21 countries are in default or seeking restructuring.

Why Debt Distress Exists?

- When governments spend beyond their means, they must borrow to finance their spending.
- This can lead to the accumulation of debt over time, especially if the government's spending is not matched by a corresponding increase in revenue.
- In addition, when a country's exports decrease, it can lead to a decline in foreign currency earnings, making it more difficult for the country to service its foreign currency-denominated debts.
- This situation can be especially challenging for countries that rely heavily on exports for their economic growth.
- Commodity prices can be volatile, and when they decline, it can lead to a decline in government revenue, making it more challenging to service debt obligations.
- This situation can be exacerbated when countries borrow heavily to invest in their commodity sectors, leading to a further accumulation of debt.
- Aging populations and declining birth rates, can also contribute to debt distress.
- These changes can lead to declining economic growth, increased public spending on pensions and healthcare, and declining tax revenues.
- This situation can be challenging for countries that have high levels of debt and limited resources to address these demographic challenges.

Contributing Factors

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the global economy, leading to a significant decline in economic activity, and causing many countries to accumulate high levels of debt as they try to support their economies and people.

Challenges of India's Informal Economy

In India, more than 90 per cent of workforce and about 50 per cent of the national product are accounted for by the informal economy.

A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in the informal economic activities.

- All unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or families involved in the sale and production of products and services on a proprietary or partnership basis are classified as informal.
- The government needs to take action to formalise the sector and provide ample employment opportunities with job security and other social security benefits.

Challenges

- Informal workers are often paid lower wages compared to their counterparts in the formal sector.
- Exploitation, including long working hours and poor working conditions, is common, contributing to a cycle of poverty for many individuals.
- Further, workers in this type of economy often face job insecurity with no formal contracts or job benefits.
- This lack of job security makes it challenging for individuals to plan for the future and can lead to increased vulnerability.
- Informal work is similarly linked with gender inequality.
- In two out of three low- and lower-middle-income countries, women are more likely than men not only to be in informal employment, but also to be in the most precarious and low-paying categories of informal employment.
- This economy also operates outside the purview of many labour laws and regulations.
- This absence of legal protections exposes workers to exploitation and makes it difficult for them to seek recourse for workplace grievances.
- Similarly, workers in the informal economy are often more vulnerable to economic downturns and external shocks.
- Since many operate in sectors with irregular demand may face greater challenges in maintaining a stable income during economic crises.

Scenario of Informal Workers According to E-Shram Portal

- Over 94% of the 27.69 million informal sector workers enrolled

Global Supply Chain Resilience

There is a visible churning in geopolitics and geoeconomics; the trade war between the United States and China, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the breakdown of the multilateral system are all driving global supply chains to be evaluated and reconfigured.

The epidemic accelerated the migration of global supply chains that began with the trade dispute between the United States and China, exposing major vulnerabilities in vital commodity production networks.

Supply Chain Challenges

- In the face of multi-country disruptions, supply networks lack global resilience and are breaking down.
- Supply chain and operations are growing more expensive (e.g., less global and ecommerce fulfillment expenses) – and can often be the greatest costs for a company.
- Supply chains and activities have major environmental and societal implications that do not match stakeholders' expectations for long-term sustainability.
- Talent shortages in the supply chain and operations continue to place a heavy reliance on human labour.
- Further, the inability to meet customer requests for personalization and customization is hampered by a lack of flexibility.
- Moreover, with an increasing digitization of supply chain processes, cyber-security threats also pose a significant risk. Cyber-attacks on supply chain systems can lead to data breaches, disruption of operations, and compromise of sensitive information.
- Overly complex and extended supply chains can lead to inefficiencies and difficulties in responding quickly to disruptions.
- Streamlining and simplifying supply chain processes can enhance resilience.

The Four Pillars of Resilient Supply Chain

- Given the scale and scope of today's global supply chains, there is no way for a company to predict and prepare for every possible risk.
- However, what a company can do is build resilience — proactively addressing the critical vulnerabilities in its

Constitutional Discourse

This sectional compendium on contemporary societal evolution is reflected through important constitutional discourse that has shaped the very fabric of India's governance. The comprehensive exploration spans pivotal issues that have dynamically influenced the evolution of the Indian Constitution. From reforms in governance to the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence, the section scrutinizes key facets that redefine the constitutional landscape. Its insightful analysis delves into diverse societal segments, exploring issues with profound constitutional implications. As we navigate through the constitutional tapestry of the year, readers will witness the unfolding issues of India's constitutional journey—capturing the essence of transformative reforms and addressing challenges that resonate across the spectrum of our society.

Caste Census

Caste census means inclusion of caste-wise tabulation of India's population in the Census exercise. The last time India conducted a caste-based census was in 1931 during the British colonial period.

Since then, the decennial censuses in independent India have not included questions related to caste.

- The primary reason for the discontinuation of caste-based enumeration was a concern about the potential for the census data to be politically sensitive and divisive. Over the years, there have been debates and discussions on whether to reintroduce caste-based enumeration in the census.
- Bihar recently became the first state to release the caste based census. According to the survey Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Extremely Backward Castes (EBC) account for 63% of the state's population.
- The issue of conducting a caste-based census has been a subject of political debate, with different political parties and leaders expressing varying opinions on whether it should be reintroduced.

Caste Census Proposal

- There have been periodic discussions and proposals to reintroduce caste-based enumeration in the national census. Proponents argue that such data could be valuable for targeted policy-making and affirmative action programs.

Concerns and Criticisms

- Critics of caste-based enumeration express concerns about the potential misuse of such data, the perpetuation of caste identities, and the possibility of increasing social tensions. Some argue that focusing on socio-economic indicators would be more beneficial.

Advantages

Targeted Policy Formulation: Caste-based census data could aid in formulating more targeted and effective policies and programs aimed at addressing the specific needs of different caste groups. This could include affirmative action measures and social welfare programs.

Social Justice and Equity: Caste-based enumeration may contribute to a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, helping to address historical socio-economic disparities among various caste groups.

Challenges Facing

Indian Society

Embark on a journey through the heart of India's societal dynamics in our annual section, where we unravel pressing social issues that reverberate nationwide. Addressing diverse facets of society, this section sheds light on contemporary social issues, offering in-depth analysis of various aspects and delivering a comprehensive understanding of pivotal matters shaping our collective future. The section concludes with the 'India Update' segment that offers key facts and data related to India's social landscape.

Issues of International Relations

This section sheds light on a global odyssey in international relations, offering an insightful lens into the dynamic interplay between India and the world. This comprehensive journey navigates through important yearly developments that have shaped India's position on the global stage. From emerging areas where India plays a pivotal role to burning international issues, the section covers a diverse spectrum of global affairs. Besides, the section also covers important challenges and yearly events which have caused tectonic shifts in global governance. Hence the readers can anticipate a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of India's engagement with the international community, unveiling the nation's rising influence and contributions.

India's G20 Leadership

The 18th G20 Summit took place at New Delhi's Bharat Mandapam International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre on September 9-10, 2023, marking the first G20 summit in India and South Asia.

Guided by the theme 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (One Earth, One Family, One Future), the summit concluded with the unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, a significant diplomatic triumph for India, showcasing consensus, even from Russia and China, on addressing the Ukraine crisis.

New Delhi Leaders' Declaration

Strong, Sustainable, Balanced, and Inclusive Growth: The Declaration emphasizes the need for a comprehensive framework to identify global value chains, addressing risks collaboratively. A 'Financial Inclusion Action Plan' is proposed to rapidly promote the financial inclusion of individuals and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Accelerating Progress towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Member States recognize the importance of strengthening the Group on Earth Observation Global Agriculture Monitoring (GEOGLAM) and Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) to enhance progress towards the SDGs.

Green Growth Agreement for a Sustainable Future: Developing countries, requiring $5.3 to 5.9 trillion by 2030 for implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions, propose a Green Growth Agreement to facilitate necessary finance.

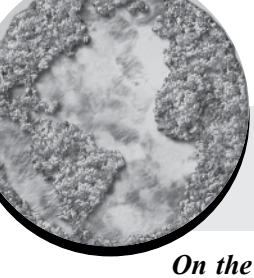
Multilateral Institutions for the 21st Century: A broad consensus is reached on 'UNGA 75/1' related to the reform of the 'United Nations Security Council.' A roadmap is agreed upon to implement recommendations from the G20 independent review on the Multilateral Development Bank Capital Adequacy Framework.

Technological Transformation and Digital Public Infrastructure: Creation of a 'Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR)' is proposed to share best practices in the development and use of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). A joint roadmap is set for a coordinated 'Policy and Regulatory Framework' for crypto-assets.

International Taxation: Reaffirmation of commitment to the 'Twin-Pillars of the International Tax Package,' focusing on 'Profit Allocation and Alliances' and 'Global Minimum Taxation.'

Environmental Conservation & Sustainability

This section offers a comprehensive exploration of important developments in environmental landscape of India and world. We have delved into critical issues, examining both national and international policies and programmes that have shaped the environmental discourse. From local concerns to global initiatives, our coverage provides insights into the intricate dimensions of environmental challenges. The 'India Update' segment concludes the section, offering readers the latest facts, statistics, and relevant information about India's environmental stance. This concise yet insightful section ensures a holistic understanding of the year's environmental developments, encapsulating the essence of our commitment to a sustainable future.



Loss and Damage Fund: Issues and Challenges

On the inaugural day of the recent COP28 climate conference held in Dubai, the official launch of a loss and damage fund marked a significant step in assisting vulnerable nations in addressing the repercussions of climate change.

The initial funding for this fund is estimated at $475 million, with the host UAE pledging $100 million, the European Union committing $275 million, the US contributing $17.5 million, and Japan offering $10 million.

Understanding the Loss and Damage Fund

- The 'Loss and Damage' (L&D) fund serves as a financial mechanism crafted to tackle the irreversible consequences of climate change that cannot be mitigated through adaptation efforts.
- While adaptation involves proactive measures to cope with climate change, the L&D fund aims to recognize and compensate for the tangible losses experienced by communities, countries, and ecosystems due to the impacts of climate change.
- These losses go beyond monetary value, striking at the heart of human rights, well-being, and environmental sustainability.

Global Scale of Loss & Damage

- Research indicates that over the past two decades, 55 vulnerable countries collectively endured $525 billion in losses fuelled by the climate crisis.
- Projections suggest that this figure could escalate to $580 billion annually by 2030.
- The transformative impact of global warming has profoundly altered the way vulnerable communities live, with the most severe consequences being borne by those least equipped to cope.

Loss and Damage Fund: Issues

Insufficient Funding: One of the primary issues with loss and damage funds is the inadequacy of financial resources. The scale of loss and damage caused by climate change is vast, and the available funds often fall short of meeting the actual needs of affected communities. This can hinder effective and timely responses to climate-related disasters and events.

Attribution Challenges: Determining the direct causation of loss and damage due to climate change is a complex task. Attribution challenges make it difficult to clearly identify the responsible parties and allocate funds accordingly. This issue

Developments in

Science & Technology

India's rise on the global stage is accompanied with rapid advancement in science and technology. Focused on space exploration, artificial intelligence, and modern technological disruptions, this section delves into the ever-evolving landscape of new technologies and innovations. It offers a holistic exploration of India's scientific endeavours. Unveiling contemporary challenges, the section ensures a nuanced understanding of the technological threats posed in the contemporary society. The section concludes with an 'India Update' segment wherein we have provided the latest facts, figures and statistics, keeping our readers abreast of the dynamic developments in the realm of science and technology, fostering an informed and forward-looking perspective.

Deepfakes

In November 2023, the Central Government issued advisory to the significant social media intermediaries to ensure that due diligence is exercised and reasonable efforts are made to identify misinformation and deepfakes, and in particular, information that violates the provisions of rules and regulations and/or user agreements.

It also directed that such cases are expeditiously actioned against, well within the timeframes stipulated under the IT Rules 2021.

- Emphasizing legal obligations under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, the government outlined areas where intermediaries haven't fully complied, including the submission of status reports, communication on prohibited content, and aligning terms of service with the law.
- Platforms are required to facilitate in-app reporting of content violating IT law provisions, mapping these violations with other laws, and treating user reports as grievances under the IT Act, specifying a timeframe and adjudicatory mechanism for resolution.

What are Deepfakes?

- Deepfakes refer to fabricated content, encompassing videos, images, and audio, generated through potent Artificial Intelligence tools. Coined in 2017 by a Reddit user, the term gained prominence when explicit videos of celebrities surfaced.
- The technology behind deepfakes utilizes generative adversarial networks (GANs), a machine learning technique.
- GANs analyze and replicate subjects' movements and facial expressions from source material to create realistic content.
- Creators leverage extensive databases of source images, often focusing on public figures, celebrities, and politicians for authenticity.
- The process involves one software creating the fake content and another detecting forgery signs, engaging in unsupervised learning to challenge identification by external software, making deepfakes harder to detect.

Concerns Regarding Deepfakes

Promotion of 'Liar's Dividend': This term refers to dismissing undesirable truths as deepfakes or fake news, exemplified by leaders

Government Initiatives

This section offers a comprehensive overview of important government initiatives shedding light on vital Bills, Acts, Plans, Policies, Reports, Indices, Committees, Commissions, and landmark Judgments. It provides the readers with valuable insights into the dynamic landscape of the nation's development, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the year's significant milestones.

Bills and Acts

In 2023, legislative corridors witnessed a transformative surge with the passage of crucial Bills and Acts shaping the governance landscape. This section delves into the legislative tapestry of the year, unravelling impactful measures that resonate in our daily lives.

Economy

The Telecommunications Act, 2023

In December 2023, the President gave assent to the Telecommunications Bill, 2023.

- It replaced the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, and the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950.

Salient Features

- Authorisation for Telecom-related Activities: Prior authorisation from the central government will be required to provide telecommunication services, establish, operate, maintain, or expand telecommunications networks, or possess radio equipment.
- Existing licenses will continue to be valid for the period of their grant, or for five years, where the period is not specified.

Spectrum Allocation: Spectrum will be assigned by auction, except for specified uses, where it will be allocated on an administrative basis.

- These include purposes such as national security and defense, disaster management, weather forecasting, transport, satellite services such as DTH and satellite telephony, and BSNL, MTNL, and public broadcasting services.
- **Satellite Internet Allotment:** It introduces provisions for allocating spectrum to satellite Internet providers like OneWeb (supported by Bharti) and U.S.-based companies such as SpaceX's Starlink.

Powers of Interception and Search: Messages or a class of messages between two or more persons may be intercepted, monitored, or blocked on certain grounds.

- Such actions must be necessary or expedient in the interest of public safety or public emergency, and must be in the interest of specified grounds which include: security of the state, prevention of incitement of offenses, or public order.

India
&
World
at a Glance

India at a Glance

India, also known as 'Bharat', is a Union of States. It is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic with a parliamentary system of government. India is the largest democracy in the world.

The Constitution of India

The Republic is governed in terms of the Constitution of India which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949 and came into force on 26th January, 1950.

- The Constitution provides for a Parliamentary form of government which is federal in structure with certain unitary features.
- **President:** The constitutional head of the Executive of the Union is the President.
- **Rajya Sabha/Lok Sabha:** As per Article 79 of the Constitution of India, the council of the Parliament of the Union consists of the President and two Houses known as the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of the People (Lok Sabha).
- Article 74(1) of the Constitution provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head to aid and advise the President, who shall exercise his/her functions in accordance to the advice.
- **Council of Ministers:** The real executive power is thus vested in the Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister as its head.
- **Governor:** In the states, the Governor, as the representative of the President, is the head of Executive. According to the Constitution of India, the Governor is a state's de jure head, but de facto executive authority rests with the chief minister.

India: Brief Facts

- **Capital:** New Delhi
- **Area:** 32, 87, 263 sq.km. (Seventh Largest Country)
- **States/UTs:** 28 States 8 Union Territories (The state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated to two UTs – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and came into existence on 31st October 2019. Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu were merged to form one UT and came into existence on 26th January 2020).
- **Population:** 1,210,854,977 (17% of World Population) as per Census 2011
- **Density of Population:** 382 per Sq. Km.
- **Sex Ratio:** 1020 as per NFHS-5 (2019-21)
- **Literacy:** 74.04% (Male: 82.14; Female: 65.46)
- **Official Languages:** English, Hindi

Current GK

United Nations & its Organs

United Nations (UN) was the second multipurpose international organization established in the 20th century that was worldwide in scope and membership. Its predecessor, the League of Nations, was created by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and disbanded in 1946. Headquartered in New York City, the UN also has regional offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. Its official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

Founded in: 1945

Headquarters: New York City (U.S.A.)

Members States: 193

Work/Objective: It is an intergovernmental organization whose stated purposes are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, achieve international cooperation, and serve as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

India and UN: As a founding member of the United Nations, India strongly supports the purposes and principles of the UN and has made significant contributions to implementing the goals of the Charter.

Principal Organs of the UN

The UN has six principal operational organizations: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, the UN Secretariat, and the Trusteeship Council, although the Trusteeship Council has been inactive since 1994.

UN General Assembly (UNGA)

Founded in: 1945

Headquarters: New York City (U.S.A.)

Members States: 193

Work/Objective: The UNGA is responsible for the UN budget, appointing the non-permanent members to the Security Council, appointing the UN secretary-general, receiving reports from other parts of the UN system, and making recommendations through resolutions. It also establishes numerous subsidiary organs to advance or assist in its broad mandate. The UNGA is the only UN organ where all member states have equal representation.