

United Nations General Assembly

A key event in the UN calendar

A universal representation of countries

- Created in 1945, the General Assembly is one of the main bodies of the UN
- It brings together all UN Member States
- Its role is to set out the main directions for the UN
- In 1945: 55 Member States
In 2017: 193 Member States
- It is a multilateral discussion forum unlike any other in the world
 - o It is representative: 1 State = 1 voice
 - o It is deliberative: it is a place where States negotiate and debate
 - o It adopts decisions (resolutions, declarations)

Functioning

What issues does it deal with?

- The General Assembly regularly meets in **6 main committees**:
 - o Disarmament and international security issues
 - o Economic and financial issues
 - o Social, humanitarian and cultural issues
 - o Special political and decolonization issues
 - o Administrative and budgetary issues
 - o Legal issues
- To examine:
 - o Key issues
 - General principles of cooperation to maintain international peace and security
 - Development of international cooperation in economic, social, cultural and educational spheres
 - o The general functioning of the organization
 - Decides on the admission of new members upon the recommendation of the Security Council
 - Examines and approves the budget
 - Appoints the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council

How are decisions made?

- **The Assembly adopts resolutions which help establish standards and codify international law.**
- **Resolutions are made after debates which end with a vote in plenary session:**
 - o For important issues, decisions are made by a two-thirds majority
 - o For routine issues, a simple majority is sufficient
- For several years now, depending on the subject, Member States have been trying to make most decisions by consensus instead of going to a vote.

September 2017: the 72nd session of the General Assembly

Several themes are tackled in each ordinary session.

- In 2017: **climate and the environment, counter-terrorism, education and major ongoing conflicts: North Korea, Syria, Libya, Yemen, etc.**

Organization

- A general debate
- High-level political meetings (Heads of State and Government, Ministers)
- High-Level events on specific themes
- More informal side events with civil society to discuss key UN topics

Every year, the General Assembly elects a president for a one-year mandate.

- In 2017, it was the Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Miroslav Lajčák

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