SECTION 5

ACTORS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

GHANA IN THE GLOBAL SYSTEM
Ghana in the Community of Nations

Introduction

The section aims to assess actors in the international system. It looks at different actors in the global system as divided into two main groups: the state and the non-state actors. The discussion in this section is that the international system is increasingly shaped by social forces and non-state actors. It seems that states alone cannot handle issues that arise but rather need the joint efforts of individuals, groups, and coalitions. For a better understanding of the lessons, different interactive methods have been used.

By the end of the section, learners will have an improved understanding of the values of patriotism, loyalty, fairness, and commitment as well as 21st century skills, such as communication skills, leadership, and critical thinking skills. The themes covered by the section are state and non-state actors in the international system and a Recap of Year 1 learning.

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain state and non-state actors in the international system
- Revision and recap

Key Idea

- Countries depend on each other for mutual benefits through individuals, groups and institutions.

MEANINGS AND TYPES OF ACTORS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The international system is a set of relationships among units, states and non-state actors structured according to certain rules and patterns of interaction which may be direct or indirect. Several individuals, groups and institutions' actions and activities shape the global system in a meaningful and active way. These individuals, groups and institutions are collectively known as actors and are generally put into two groups referred to as state and non-state actors.

State Actors

State actors are individuals and institutions that act on behalf of states/countries. State actors set objectives which seek to address the challenges and protect the well-being of current and future generations. State actors usually derive authority from constitutional sources or other legal sources. Examples are the executive (President, Foreign Minister), the legislature, intelligence/security agencies/the civil bureaucracy.

Fig. 5.1: ECOWAS heads of state

Non-state Actors

Non-state actors are individuals and organisations who act on behalf of themselves, their members or their interest groups. They do not speak on behalf of the state but can influence the formulation of foreign policy decisions of governments. Examples include powerful individuals in Ghana such as Joseph Agyepong founder of Jospong Group of Companies dealing in waste management, construction and technology, Ibrahim Mahama founder of Engineers and Planners, a leading construction and mining company, and internationally individuals such as Bill Gates, as well as non-profit organisations, multinational corporations, and labour unions.
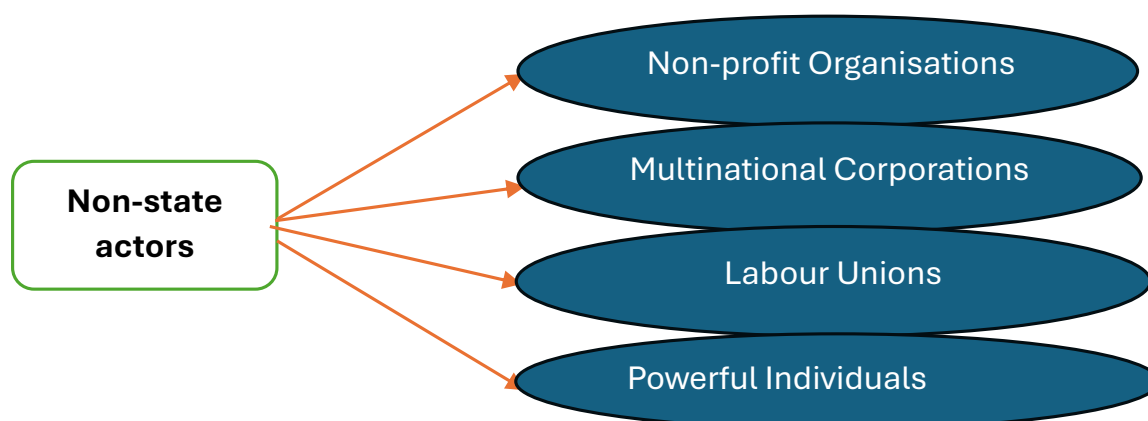
Fig. 5.2: Examples of Non-State Actors

National State Actors

National state actors in the international system are the Government Ministers of all countries, with the President/Prime Minister and Foreign Minister/Secretary being the most important for international relations.

International State Actors

They are normally known as international governmental organisations (IGOs) and are formed by two or more sovereign states with specific objectives. They are also called inter-governmental organisations and may be global, regional or sub-regional. Examples of global IGOs are the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Regional IGOs include the African Union and the European Union. Examples of sub-regional IGOs are the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern Africa Development Community.

National Non-state Actors

These refer to domestic individuals, groups and institutions that shape a country's decision on the international scene/stage. Examples include think tanks (e.g., the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)/ the Centre for Democratic Development-Ghana; Labour Unions (e.g., the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the Ghana Union of Traders Association) and Interest Groups (e.g., Occupy Ghana)

International Non-state Actors

International non-state actors also called Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are private and formed by individuals or a group of individuals whose operations cut across national borders. It must be acknowledged that they play diverse functions/roles in states or governments. Examples of these actors are Multinational Corporations (Coca-Cola, General Motors, Tullow Oil), Amnesty International, World Vision, the World Muslim Council, and terrorist organisations, e.g., Al Qaeda.

Influential Personalities

These are individuals, often respected statesmen or stateswomen, who have distinguished themselves in one way or another. They are usually called upon to influence the decisions of state actors because of the amount of respect they command internationally or their wealth. Examples (past and present) include Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and Oprah Winfrey.

Role of State Actors

State Actors play very important roles in international relations, here are some of the roles:

1. **Formulation and implementation of foreign policy decisions**

    State actors/officials formulate alternative policies to deal with foreign policy issues. In other words, state actors take decisions, steps and measures concerning other states and international bodies. The foreign policy decisions by state actors are varied and they include political, social, economic, security/military. Since independence, the state actors involved in foreign policy formulation in Ghana include the President, Parliament, and Council of State among others. [NB: Year Two Learner Material will give a detailed explanation of this topic]. State actors pursue foreign policy to promote such values as democracy, human rights, and attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI). For the implementation of foreign policies, state actors take seriously into consideration the allocation of resources in terms of budget, personnel, and diplomatic efforts.

2. **Protect the interest of their citizens in the international system.**

    State actors also pursue what may be referred to as the 'common good', meaning protecting the welfare of its citizens in the international system. In this regard, states engage in various activities such as negotiating with other states to reach agreements and for peaceful resolution of conflicts and participating in global discussions or forums such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Further, states reach trade agreements, impose sanctions and provide foreign aid to promote their economic interests.

3. **Ensure stability of the global system.**

    Stability and peace of the international system is very important for the growth and development of states. However, ensuring stability is the responsibility of several actors and institutions. Concerning global stability, state actors engage in various efforts including but not limited to open communication channels with other states to prevent misunderstanding, and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts through mediation, peacekeeping and promotion of trade and investment.

Role of Non-state Actors

The contemporary international system comprises several states, groups, and institutions whose daily decisions and actions affect those who live within the international system. However, due to the complexity of the global system, state actors have ceased to be the only recognised actors. Non-state actors also play a very important role in the international system.

1. **Influence policy decision-making of national governments**

   Non-state actors influence the formulation of foreign policy decisions of national government. Their activities may be influential when foreign policy is being formulated. They try to lobby government ministers, legislators and civil servants who are advisors to politicians.

2. **Creation of job opportunities**

   Non-state actors representing multi-national Corporations (MNCs) and corporations are influential in the international system partly because of their role in employment and job creation o. MNCs which are companies that have their origin in one country with subsidiaries in several other countries establish sole or joint ventures in the areas of manufacturing, logistics and the services sectors. MNCs through their foreign direct investment (FDI) are very instrumental in the creation of employment and provision of social infrastructure services in both the host country and country of origin. As such, many developing countries are putting measures in place to attract them (FDI).

3. **Transfers of technology**

   Non-state actors in the international system also transfer technology and provide requisite technical training and capacity building to governments and other organisations. They share information on research and innovations from one sector to another, mostly from more developed countries to less advanced countries or organisations. The transfer of technology will in the long run boost their economies and enhance human development.

Activity 5.1: Actors in the International System

1. Using the school or community library, research and write a two-page paper on the meaning and type of actors in the international system. The first page should discuss state actors, and the second page should outline non-state actors. Compare your answers with peers and prepare a presentation.

2. Research and write the differences and similarities between international state actors and international non-state actors. The table below gives examples to help you get started.

Differences

International state actors	International non-state actors
State actors are accountable to their citizens as sovereignty resides in the citizens.	Non-state actors may be accountable to their members or donors.

Similarities

International State Actors	International Non-state Actors
They both aim to promote the interest of their members being political, economic, social and cultural.	

3. Write a one-page essay on the role of state and non-state actors in the international system. Share your findings with friends. You may use the following links.

   • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLPvzieC7rw

   • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vbk5ayw1IY

   • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKYyudDx2CU

   • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgainpGldwU

4. Follow the link to watch/listen to an audio description video of the activities of national non-state actors. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTAWngj5qRo /https://youtu.be/JNRrTlRht8g.

5. Based on the videos, in a group of three, prepare a presentation on the role of national-non-state actors and the influential personalities in the international system. Your teacher may ask you to present it in class.

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS (ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES - ECOWAS)

Background/Origin

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) emerged at a Treaty in Lagos on 28th May 1975. It was originally inaugurated primarily as an economic cooperation and integration organisation after the challenges of the 1970s due to the oil crisis of 1973. It is an organisation that cut across all colonial boundaries, consisting of Anglophone (Ghana, Nigeria, the Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone), Francophone (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Sénégal and Togo) and Lusophone (Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau) countries of the sub-region. However, in the aftermath of several domestic violent conflicts in the sub-region, ECOWAS has assumed a more political role.

NB: Mauritania, a signatory to the Treaty of Lagos withdrew its membership of ECOWAS in 2002

Fig. 5.3: ECOWAS member states

Aims/Purpose of ECOWAS

1. Promote economic integration and development among member states
2. Eliminate trade restrictions/barriers
3. Promote free movement of persons, goods and services among member states
4. Harmonise the economic and monetary policies of member states
5. Create a fund for cooperation, compensation, and development among member states.

Achievements of ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has made several achievements since it was established in 1975. Here are some of the achievements listed below:

1. **Promotion of democratic governance**

   Through monitoring, support and evaluation, ECOWAS has ensured free and fair elections in the region. It encourages a multi-party system and inclusiveness that promotes political participation, transparency, accountability, human rights, and the rule of law.

2. **Conflict prevention, management and resolution**

   ECOWAS has also been successful in conflict prevention, management, and resolution through peacekeeping operations. It identifies potential conflict areas and quickly takes active measures to prevent them from happening or spreading. Conflict management usually means putting plans in place to contain and reduce their effects by working towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts while also addressing the underlying causes.

3. **Promotion of free movement of persons**

   It has facilitated the free movement of citizens of member states within the region by removing barriers to migration like visas and border controls and fostering cooperation on border security and management. This brought about an increase in economic opportunities and labour mobility, competition and innovation, better response to market needs and enhanced regional trade and investment.

4. **Response to humanitarian emergencies**

   Another achievement of ECOWAS has been its ability to respond to emergencies like natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and wildfires. Other assistance in health emergencies include in response to diseases like Ebola and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, there have been interventions during ethnic conflicts and violence and the attendant refugee crises. In such emergencies, ECOWAS provides humanitarian services such as disaster risk reduction and management, provision of food and nutrition programmes, health and medical supplies, and shelter.

5. **Trade liberalisation**

   ECOWAS has achieved great progress in trade liberalisation through the establishment of a common external tariff, implementation of the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme, creation of a regional customs union, implementation of the ECOWAS Common Market Protocol and many other interventions in the region. These actions by ECOWAS led to increased intra-regional trade, improved market access for goods and services, enhanced economic competitiveness, simplified trade procedures reduced costs and increased investment and economic growth.

Fig. 5.4a: Image of a detained president (Guinea)

Fig. 5.4b: Image of a military leader of Burkina Faso

Challenges for ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) faces several challenges ranging from political, economic and social. Below are some of the challenges that the organisation faced.

1. **Political instability**

    One major challenge hindering ECOWAS from successfully achieving its goals is political instability. The ECOWAS sub-region has been experiencing issues of intra-state ethnic conflicts and civil wars. For example, Liberia and Sierra Leone have witnessed several periods of civil unrest. These and many others make it difficult for ECOWAS to promote regional integration and economic cooperation. Political instability in member countries leads to cross-border issues such as refugee flows, and security threats to citizens. The hosting of the refugees puts an extra financial burden on the organisation and may also result in the inability to implement regional policies.

2. **Undemocratic regimes and military coup d'états**

The ECOWAS sub-region has experienced several authoritarian and military regimes, with political leaders who do not subscribe to the principles of democracy and the rule of law. In these cases, the governance system has been devoid of citizen participation and involvement. The undemocratic system usually led to protests violence and military involvement in the administration of the state. Many countries in the sub-region have experienced coup d'etats , meaning military takeover. For instance, within a period of three years (2021-2023), ECOWAS saw military coups in three different member states namely Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The regimes mostly do not practice democratic principles such as respect for the rights of individuals and the rule of law.

3. **Financial constraints**

The inability of member states to pay dues and honour other financial obligations affects the activities of the organisation. The fiscal difficulties result in the organisation's inability to implement regional projects such as roads, electricity, and security operations.

4. **Domestic and international terrorism**

The West Africa sub-region has the most porous border regimes in the world with the borderlands covering several ungoverned spaces where terrorist groups operate. This has created opportunities for militant groups such as Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State (ISIS) activities causing widespread insecurity and humanitarian crises.

Fig. 5.5: Terrorist groups

5. **Lack of institutional capacity building**

Many ECOWAS member states have weak institutions (Customs, Taxation, Immigration) and struggle with effective governance. This lack of strong institutions makes it hard to carry out policies and reforms needed for regional cooperation and economic growth.

Activity 5.2: ECOWAS

1. In three sentences, write the meaning, aims and works of ECOWAS. Share your responses with a friend for a class discussion. Visit https://www.ecowas.int/ for more information.

2. Identify and label the countries that make up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). You may go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lGm_vvxS4Eg to use the map.

3. Research on the impacts of ECOWAS on the development of the Ghanaian state and create an informative poster that raises awareness and paste it around the classroom. Think about what issues can unite and divide Ghana and other ECOWAS member states. Your teacher might chair a debate on the points raised during the class discussions. Go to http://google.com to search and read the most recent news story.

4. Using library or online resources, research the top three achievements of ECOWAS. Identify which of the five ECOWAS aims the achievements contribute to. What challenges might ECOWAS face in trying to achieve these successes? Present your findings using the format below.

Achievements

Economic	Political	Socio-cultural

Challenges

Economic	Political	Socio-cultural

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS - AFRICAN UNION (AU)

Background/Origin

The African Union (AU) has its roots in the Manchester Pan-Africanism Congress of 1946. To promote unity, equity and economic welfare of the African people, the now-defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was established by the then-independent states of Africa on 25 May 1963. In July 2002, the OAU was relaunched in Durban, South Africa, and replaced by the African Union (AU). It focuses primarily on achieving political integration. Thus, the AU's integration agenda is driven by efforts towards socio-economic cooperation with emphasis on democratisation, human rights, good governance, and the rule of law as contained in the Agenda 2063 (AU 2063).

Headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the AU currently covers a population of over 1.3 billion. Today, the 54 African countries represent over a quarter of the United Nation's total of 193 member states. The founding treaty called the Constitutive Act of the African Union, provides for ten organs namely: the Assembly of Heads of State and Government (AHSG), the Executive Council, the Security and Peace Council, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, the Commission, the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Specialised Technical Committees (STCs), the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), and the Financial Institutions.

Fig. 5.6a: African Continent Flags **Fig. 5.6b:** Ordinary Session of the AU, Addis Ababa.

Aims/Purpose of AU

1. To promote peace, security, and stability of the African continent
2. To promote democratic principles and good governance within member states
3. To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of African states.
4. Promote human rights per the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and other relevant instruments.
5. To promote and defend Africa's position on important issues in the global system among others.

Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

Agenda 2063 (AU 2063) is a blueprint or long-term plan the African Union (AU) adopted to define and structure the continent's sustainable growth and development. The AU aims at restoring peace and stability and promotes rapid development through the full involvement of the private and public sectors. Agenda 2063 sets out a 50-year development framework which requires AU member states to integrate it into their national development plans in a three-phase-based approach. Agenda 2063 is an attempt by African leaders to use home-grown approaches to the development challenges facing the continent—the use of African solutions to African problems. Agenda 2063 has seven aspirations with 39 priority areas.

Goals and Aspirations of Agenda 2063

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law.
4. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values, and ethics
5. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth and caring for children among others.

Achievements of AU

1. **Promotion of democracy and good governance**

   One of the achievements of the AU/OAU since its inception is seeing the transition of most African countries under authority/military rule to civilian administration. In the early 1990s, many states in Africa moved to create some form of multiparty democracy. The AU has been against the military takeover of the reins of government. The AU member States have acknowledged the relation between democracy, rule of law and economic development under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). NEPAD has the idea of promoting and protecting democracy and human rights by developing standards of accountability and transparency in their respective countries and regions.

2. **Conflict prevention, resolution, and peacekeeping operations**

   The African Union has also engaged in human rights protection and peacebuilding under what is commonly referred to as the African-led peace support operations. The organisation has deployed troops to war-torn countries since its establishment in 2002. The African continent has been beset by several civil wars and intra-state conflicts with women, children, and youth suffering from the impacts of these wars. To protect civilians, the AU since its establishment has been involved in more than thirty different peacekeeping operations in over 20 countries. These peacekeeping operations include the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Comoros, Sudan (Darfur) and Mali. The AU is currently supporting peacekeeping efforts in Somalia

(African Union Transition Mission in Somalia) and the Central Africa Republic (African Union Military Observer Mission to the Central African Republic).

3. **Trade and investments**

The African Union promotes trade and investment as opposed to the previous OAU which was primarily concerned with the issue of decolonisation. The AU has launched several investment initiatives such as NEPAD which detailed tackling problems of poverty, illiteracy, gender inequality, and infant and child mortality. Another impact of the NEPAD initiative is the deployment and use of ICT in education (e-school project) and other service delivery. Current trade and investment policies are the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Agenda 2063. These programmes have attracted investment and increased inter-regional trade or intra-African trade. This has attracted private capital into several African states with the net effect of job creation and improvement in the economic well-being of the citizenry.

4. **Economic performance**

Another landmark achievement of the African Union is the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The AU focuses on promoting regional integration and African unity through socio-economic integration. It set up the AfCFTA as the most comprehensive continental trade arrangement to solve the low trade among African countries. It seeks to create a single market for goods and services and movement across borders. Trading activities under AfCFTA began in 2021, with the headquarters in Accra, Ghana.

Challenges for the African Union (AU)

1. **Political instability**

One of the most discouraging problems hindering the effort of the African Union in integrating the continent towards developmental transformation is intra-state and inter-state conflicts. However, the continental body or member-states cannot commit meaningfully to conflict prevention and resolution without outside assistance. More than forty wars have been fought on the African continent since independence in places such as Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burundi. The economic cost and the human toll have been devastating. Whole states have collapsed, infrastructures have been destroyed, and millions of people have become refugees. Intercommunal violence also hurts both democracy and development in Africa. Psychological trauma is also substantial given the violence, rape, and the use of children as soldiers. Violence, conflict and insecurity in the African continent continue to inhibit social and political progress and limit economic growth.

2. **Involvement of the military in political affairs**

After the attainment of political independence in most African states in the 1960s, it was hoped that economic growth and development would come to the majority of African citizens. However, this hope was dashed sooner than it had begun. Several individuals and groups took up arms against constitutionally elected governments. The changes in political administrations did not happen through the ballot. The

majority of states in Africa, particularly West Africa have experienced military administrations with attendant countercoups and armed confrontations. Presently, the Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali have seen the military and the police into the national political space.

3. **Financial constraints**

AU faces the perennial problem of a financial deficit. AU member-states do not have the financial resources to implement their national development to improve the material well-being of their citizens. Most AU countries rely extensively on external donors for operational costs or activities. Member states are therefore unable to pay the dues and other financial obligations to support the activities of the AU.

4. **Poverty and diseases**

Political leaders in Africa have not been able to improve the standard of living of the majority the citizens through better housing, good prices for agricultural products and other economic activities, better transportation and marketing of rural produce, education as a means of social mobility, an adequate supply of clean water, electricity and health-care facilities. The economy of most African states is not diversified resulting in high unemployment, particularly among the urban youth. In addition, the continent has experienced several diseases. The spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), (which is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)), Ebola and the COVID-19 pandemic. They kill adults in the prime of their working lives, destroy the workforce, send families into poverty, and orphans millions.

5. **Human trafficking and arms trade**

The protection of human rights is provided as a major objective for the AU. However, the African continent has seen new threats such as migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Many Africans are 'recruited' through force, threats and other coercion, then transported for exploitation such as prostitution mostly in Europe and the Middle East. It is a form of modern-day slavery with victims from countries such as Nigeria, Senegal Mali, Central Africa Republic, and Equatorial Guinea. States and governments have the responsibility for the prevention, protection, and prosecution of offenders of, human trafficking. However, many have weak laws to deal with the issue. The AU and its institutions have not been able to impose a duty on states to ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms have been violated shall have an effective remedy or cooperate with the law enforcement authorities to prosecute and punish traffickers. In addition, there is the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, trans-border crime, piracy and trade in narcotics which pose serious challenges to stability on the continent.

Fig. 5.7: An image of trafficked people

Activity 5. 3: Africa Union

1. Watch the video in the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Em5yJVO9f10 [play to 2:45]. Based on the video, trace the origin and discuss the aims and purposes of the African Union.

2. Research on the goals and aspirations of Agenda 2063. Show your work to a peer for feedback. Your teacher might ask you to do a group presentation. You may visit for more information https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview.

3. Watch the video in the line https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RK3vzaApKtE featuring eNCA news story: Challenges facing the continent. From the video, write the top three challenges facing the African Union. Present your findings for a whole class discussion to arrive at the main challenges confronting the African continent.

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS (THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION (UN OR UNO)

Background/Origin

To reduce the risk of conflicts and stamp out mass violence after World War II, Britain, the United States, China and the Soviet Union met in Moscow in 1943 and pledged their support to cooperate through the formation of an organisation dedicated and committed to the promotion of global peace. The discussion to restore peace continued to Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, in 1944 and at Yalta in February 1945. The United Nations (UN) decision-making structure was designed in Dumbarton Oaks. Finally, on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, fifty-one (51) states signed the United Nations Charter to maintain a new international order, peace and security.

Today, the UN comprises 193 sovereign countries called member states that have agreed on a set of rules laid out in the UN Charter. Thus, the Charter is an international treaty that spells out the rights and duties of UN member states, as part of the world community.

The structure/main organs of the United Nations are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. The Trusteeship Council became non-operational after the decolonisation process. The functions of these organs are different.

The General Assembly is where each of the 193 member states, no matter how small, have an equal vote on its resolutions. In other words, the General Assembly is the forum where all member states are represented. The Secretariat is the operational administrative body that runs the activities of the UN. It is headed by a Secretary-General, who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a renewable five-year term. The Security Council is a deliberative body composed of five permanent and ten non-permanent member states on a rotational basis. The organisation depends largely on the 'goodwill' of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and China. They make up the five Permanent Members of the Security Council and possess the right of Veto. The Security Council has wide powers for the protection and maintenance of global peace and security. The verdict of the five Permanent Members is binding on all its member states.
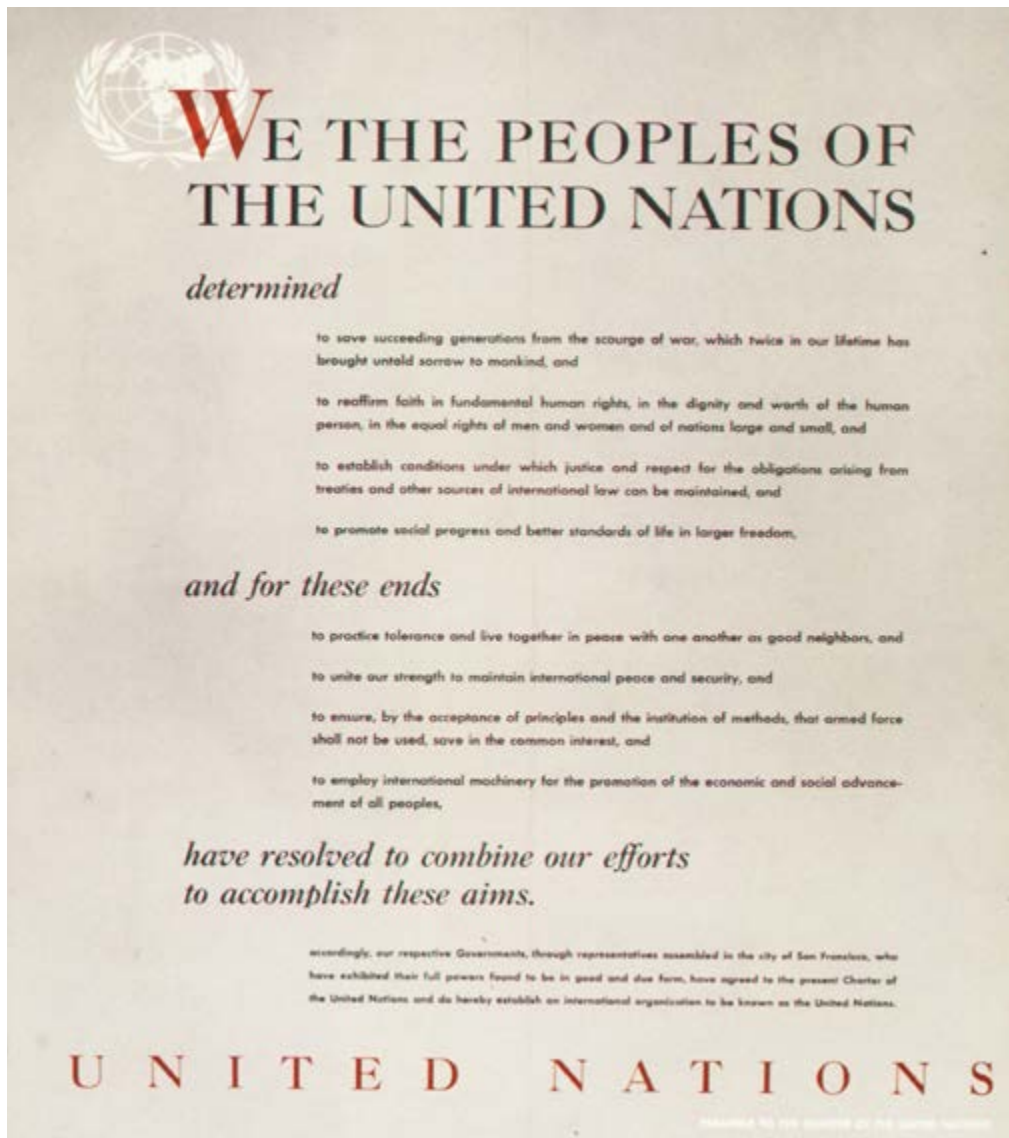
Fig. 5.8: Preamble to the Charter of the UN

Fig. 5.9: Flag of the UN

Aims and Purpose of the United Nations

1. Preservation of the international peace and collective security
2. Promotion of human rights and respect for international law
3. Promote social and economic progress among others.

Achievements of the United Nations

Assessments of the UN's performance over time vary widely. Individuals, groups and institutions have praised the world body's complex work it has undertaken since its establishment in 1945. These are some of the significant achievements of the UN.

1. **Peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations**

   Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the United Nations has engaged in several peace operations such as peacekeeping, peacebuilding and enforcement to ease the effects of wars and civil conflicts around the world. The UN keeps peace around the world using military and police personnel from many member states, who wear blue helmets to show that they are representing the UN. The men and women from the UN disband groups and combatants involved in the conflicts and monitor peace agreements. Examples of the UN peacekeeping activities to restore stability include its observer Mission in El Salvador (1991), the Congo (1960-64), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Lebanon (2000), and Sudan (2007).

Fig. 5.10: UN Oct. 2017 Photo: Permanent Mission of Ghana to the UN

Fig. 5.11: Images of the UN peacekeeping mission

2. **Provision of humanitarian assistance**

    Another achievement of the United Nations is alleviating the suffering of many people through its humanitarian efforts. Wars and conflicts have created the insecurity of hunger that affects millions of humans around the world. The UN through its specialised agencies like the World Health Organisation (WHO), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), and UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have provided humanitarian and other assistance to poor populations such as refugees in troubled or affected parts of the world. This support has gone to sectors such as health, education, nutrition, and social welfare.

3. **Support the decolonisation process**

    The UN has played a vital and rapid role in decolonization in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. After the end of the Second World War, the UN became more concerned with political and administrative change in countries still under colonial rule. The Trusteeship Council which is one of the six organs of the UN had the responsibility of ensuring 'self-government' for people under colonial rule. The deliberative organs of the UN such as the General Assembly were used to pressurise the European powers to grant independence and self-rule to countries in Africa and Asia as well as the support for elimination of apartheid in South Africa in the 1990s.

4. **Promotion of democratic governance**

    The UN, in addition to the peace settlement, assists member states in charting a path towards a system of democratic governance. The UN sees the establishment of the rule of law as desirable after horrible wars and conflicts. Subsequently,

since the 1990s, the UN has supported several countries to transition towards democracy. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) promotes governance through institutional capacity building and advisory support for programmes and projects in democratic countries. In Ghana, the UNDP has helped the Electoral Commission through the training of electoral officials to build their capacity in electoral processes. Again, the UN recruits, trains, and deploys international observers to monitor elections. The support also takes the form of supervision and independent election monitoring such as the registration of voters and inspection of the voters' register; verification of results by sending observers to the collating centres by judging whether the voting process was fair and free.

5. **Design strategic development plans.**

Another achievement of the United Nations is the launch of development plans widely known as the global goals namely the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To ensure sustainable growth and development, the UN in September 2015 introduced the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs, which have 17 goals with 169 targets and 303 indicators are concerned with development that meets the needs of the present generation (the youth) without compromising the ability of the future generation to fulfil their own needs and destiny. The SDGs will end in 2030 to address the challenges all human beings face, in terms of such as the provision of clean water and sanitation, quality education and sustainable cities. Some of the special goals are SDG 1 on ending poverty in all forms, SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 3 on healthy lives and well-being, and SDG 4 on quality education. See activity 5.15 for the full list of the 17 goals or visit https://ghana.un.org/en/sdgs. In 2000, the MDGs were adopted by UN member states aimed to reduce poverty and inequality throughout the world and ended in 2015. It had eight (8) goals.

Challenges of the United Nations

Despite the successes achieved by the UN, there are areas where the organisation has experienced some failures. Below are some of the current challenges

1. **Inadequate resources**

The United Nations is financed mostly by taxpayers from a few donor countries. Most of the member states do not pay their dues and other financial obligations. The failure and inability of member states to pay their dues affect the resources needed for the organisation to undertake several of its programmes and activities around the world.

2. **Persistence of wars/political instability**

The effects of wars and civil conflicts on states are often obvious, with infrastructure damaged, economic activities interrupted, and the labour pool lost from injury and killing of people. However, the credibility of the United Nations has been challenged as it has failed to be proactive in most conflicts. The UN failed effectively to respond to mass murder in Somalia, Bosnia (Srebrenica) and Rwanda. Further, it failed to prevent the current Ukraine-Russia war and the crises in the Middle East particularly the Israel-Palestine conflict.

3. Nuclear arms proliferation

A more general line of criticism is against the UN's inability to save mankind from the threat of mass devastation. Weapons of Mass Destruction, which include the production of chemical and biological weapons could destabilise global peace and security in the 21st century. Signatories to the agreements not to produce weapons of mass destruction (Non-Proliferation Treaty) are secretly producing modern weapons and enhancing their military capacities. The major powers particularly Russia and China have failed to declare their stockpiles, a source of frustration for many non-nuclear weapon countries. Other countries producing wide weapons are North Korea, Israel, and Iran. These arms threaten global peace and security, and the UN has not been able to prevent, stop or punish producers of these nuclear weapons.

Activity 5.4 United Nations

1. Learners, please follow the link and watch/listen to an audio description video of the preamble of the United Nations Charter. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59QBOho6hw4. What is the purpose of the UN according to the preamble? Use your own words.

2. Research the following United Nations major institutions and write a summary of the purpose and function of each institution below. Present your work for feedback from peers. More information can be found at https://www.un.org/en/about-us/main-bodies

   a. General Assembly

   b. Secretariate

   c. Security Council

   d. Economic and Social Council

   e. International Court of Justice

Watch an audio description video of the United Nations Courage for Peace documentary. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugk4Kob6UjM.

Now do the following activities.

1. What do Guéhenno (the narrator), the former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations say? Summarise in your own words. Prepare a 5-minute summary presentation of key findings. Please things to consider while summarising: The key characteristics of a peacekeeper, two major regional peacekeeping partners, and funding of peacekeeping activities.

2. The image below shows the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using the format (box), write the goal that you think is the most important to Ghanaian society. Why have you chosen this goal over the others? Write your reasons and make a presentation for feedback.

The most important SDG goal to me is …and why?

Fig. 5.10: Logos of the SDGs

Multiple Choice Questions for Revision and Recap of Year One

1. Which of the following best describes government as a discipline?
   a. The study of all subjects
   b. The government prepares the individual for leadership
   c. The study of how the government operates
   d. The study of political institutions and theories

2. The rightful use of power is?
   a. Legitimacy
   b. Authority
   c. Sovereignty
   d. Election

3. Which of the following describes the concept of feminism?
   a. Equality of the sexes
   b. Women should have the opportunity to work
   c. It is led by women
   d. Women should be superior to men

4. The process of involving different people and giving equal opportunities to all is known as...
   a. Rule of law
   b. Separation of powers
   c. Diversity
   d. Inclusion

5. The following are some of the differences among the major ethnic groups in Ghana except one.
   a. Process of selecting a chief
   b. A centralised political system
   c. Symbol of chiefly authority
   d. The existence of a queen-mother

6. A modern role of a traditional authority in Ghanaian society is
   a. Pouring of libation
   b. Mobilisation of resources for self-help projects
   c. Serving as a link between the gods and ancestors
   d. Custodian of culture

7. A set of laws used to regulate the behaviour of the organs of a state is referred to as
   a. Rule of law
   b. Customs and traditions
   c. Constitution
   d. Constitutionalism

8. Which of these best describes the presidential system of government?
   a. Separation of powers
   b. Fusion of powers
   c. Rule of law
   d. Direct election of the head of state

9. One main reason advantage of a parliamentary system of government is:
   a. It is relatively cheap to practise
   b. Ensures strict separation of powers
   c. Flexibility in a change of government
   d. Individuals account to the president

10. The branch of government responsible for examining the activities of the executive is called.
    a. Judiciary
    b. Legislature
    c. Majority leader
    d. Minority leader

11. Which of the following is NOT a reason for adopting a unicameral legislature?
    a. Forster greater accountability
    b. It is cost effective
    c. Risk of hasty laws
    d. The decision and lawmaking process is quick

12. Which of the following represents the organisational structure of the judiciary of Ghana?
    a. Supreme and Circuit court
    b. Upper and lower courts
    c. Juvenile and Appeal court
    d. High courts and regional tribunals

13. In which of the following ways is public opinion most comprehensively measured?
    a. Elections
    b. Surveys and polls
    c. Social media
    d. Focus groups

14. What is likely to happen when policymakers do not listen to the views of citizens? It may...
    a. Increase public trust
    b. Improve policy outcomes
    c. Decrease public support
    d. Have no impact

15. Which of the following is not a primary role of the media?
    a. entertain
    b. inform and educate
    c. persuade
    d. serve government interest

16. The restriction of media content by the government and other powers is seen as media ...
    a. freedom
    b. censorship
    c. quality
    d. balance

17. The most important purpose of a political party is to ...
    a. make policies
    b. serve as a platform for debate
    c. represent specific interest groups
    d. get candidates elected to public office

18. Which of the following is not a technique used by pressure groups to influence policy?
    a. demonstrations
    b. elections
    c. lobbying
    d. seminars

19. The formulation and implementation of foreign policy decisions are made by state...
    a. actors
    b. censorship
    c. dynamics
    d. diplomacy

20. The following are all achievements of ECOWAS except ...
    a. Financial constraints
    b. Promotion of democratic governance
    c. Prevention of conflict
    d. Trade liberalisation

21. The main goal of the African Union is to promote...
    a. economic development
    b. political stability
    c. unity and corporation among African states
    d. human rights

22. The Agenda 2063 seeks to address Africa's challenges in the next ...years.
    a. 50
    b. 20
    c. 63
    d. 60

23. One role of the Security Council of the UN is to...
    a. Promote economic development
    b. Protect human rights
    c. Maintain international peace and security
    d. Elect the Secretary-General

24. Which of the types of media uses the internet to spread information?
    a. Digital media
    b. Electronic media
    c. Broadcast media
    d. Print media

25. Which of the following is a feature of political parties?
    a. A loose network of individuals
    b. Well organised structure
    c. Single issue focus
    d. Lack of ideology

Review Questions

1. How do international organisations function as actors in the international system?

2. In what ways do multinational corporations influence international relations?

3. Discuss the main challenges facing ECOWAS, and how these challenges affect its ability to achieve regional integration.

4. In what ways has the approach adopted by ECOWAS to address economic development and integration among member states been successful?

5. What are the ways by which the African Union is successful in coordinating responses to health crises, such as the Ebola outbreak or COVID-19? What can Ghana learn from this experience?

Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

1. D	6. B	11. C	16. B	21. C
2. B	7. C	12. B	17. D	22. A
3. A	8. A	13. B	18. B	23. C
4. D	9. C	14. C	19. A	24. A
5. C	10. B	15. D	20. A	25. B

Answers to Review Questions

1. The following are some of the ways by which international organisations function as actors in the international system:
   - They contribute to global policies and programmes by influencing the decision-making process.
   - Support the implementation of programmes through the mobilisation of resources.
   - Provide humanitarian aid and assistance
   - Support democracy and good governance
   - Engaging in peacekeeping and conflict resolution

2. Multinational corporations influence international relations in several ways including the following:
   - They bring Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
   - They engage in lobbying efforts to influence government policies and regulations.
   - Transfer of technology and share ideas on innovations that promote development
   - They facilitate cultural exchange through their operations
   - They engage in corporate diplomacy by fostering relationships with governments and international organisations

3. The ability of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to achieve regional integration is hindered by several challenges. Some of these challenges are:
   - Many ECOWAS member states experience political instability (coup d'etats), and civil unrest.
   - ECOWAS is faced with barriers to trade among member states due to inconsistent economic policies and tariffs.
   - The problems of security, terrorism and organized crime, hinder the attempt of ECOWAS to achieve regional stability and economic development.
   - Most ECOWAS member states are bedevilled with corruption which undermines trust in the regional institutions and diverts resources away from developmental projects.
   - The bloc is faced with health and environmental challenges such as the outbreak of Ebola, COVID-19, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Some environmental challenges include climate change and environmental degradation activities such as illegal mining popular known in Ghana as 'Galamsey'

4. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) has made a giant attempt to promote economic development and regional integration among its member states through the following; below are some of the successes:

- They introduced the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)which aimed at promoting intra-regional trade by reducing tariffs on goods produced within the ECOWAS region.
- ECOWAS embarked on regional infrastructure projects such as the West African Power Pool (WAPP) and the Trans-West African Highway aiming to enhance regional energy and transportation networks, which are crucial for economic growth and integration.
- ECOWAS introduced the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ): ECOWAS which aims to establish a common currency, (Eco), for member states.
- They assist Member States by providing technical and capacity-building support to member states to help them implement regional policies and programs effectively.
- ECOWAS has been active in preventing all manner of conflicts and managing existing ones by resolving them through mediation.

5. The African Union (AU) has played a crucial role in coordinating responses to health crises such as the Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks. Below are the contributions of AU towards the health crises:

- The African Union established specialised technical institutions such as Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in 2017 to support member states during health emergencies and outbreaks of pandemics (COVID-19):
- The AU mobilises funds through donations from international partners and governments towards support for emergencies and procurement of medical supplies.
- The African Union provide technical expertise, equipment, and logistics to support the health systems of member states affected by health crises.
- The AU helps in raising public health awareness about preventive measures, treatment options, and vaccination of disease outbreaks within the region. (e.g. the AU facilitated vaccine procurement and distribution across the continent during the COVID-19 outbreak)
- The AU partners with other organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations, and the African Development Bank to coordinate global and regional responses.

Extended Reading

1. DeGhetto, K., Gray, J. R., & Kiggundu, M. N. (2016). The African Union's Agenda 2063: Aspirations, challenges, and opportunities for management research. Africa Journal of Management, 2(1), 93-116.

2. Hanhimäki, J. M. (2015). The United Nations: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press.

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4. Teye, J. K., Awumbila, M., & Nikoi, E. (2019). Ambiguity and symbolism in the implementation of the ECOWAS free movement protocol: Evidence from Ghana and Sierra Leone. African Human Mobility Review, 5(2).

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