

**English**  
Express

The Yearbook of the United Nations  
Yearbook Express

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Volume 51



# English

## Express

The Yearbook Express features Yearbook chapter introductions, along with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, for each year in question.

**YEARBOOK OF THE UNITED NATIONS, 1997**

**Volume 51**

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## **Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization**

### **Contours of the new era**

1. We live in an era of realignment. At the international and national levels alike, fundamental forces are at work reshaping patterns of social organization, structures of opportunities and constraints, the objects of aspiration and the sources of fear. As is true of all transitional periods, very different expressions of the human predicament coexist in uneasy tension today: globalization envelops the world even as fragmentation and the assertion of differences are on the rise; zones of peace expand while outbursts of horrific violence intensify; unprecedented wealth is being created but large pockets of poverty remain endemic; the will of the people and their integral rights are both celebrated and violated; science and technology enhance human life at the same time as their by-products threaten planetary life-support systems.

2. It is not beyond the powers of political volition to tip the scale in this transition, towards a more secure and predictable peace, greater economic well-being, social justice and environmental sustainability. No country can achieve these global public goods on its own, however, just as none is exempt from the risks and costs of doing without them. Multilateral diplomacy was invented and has been sustained because political leaders as well as the people they represent have recognized this simple fact. Indeed, the twentieth-century project of international organization is all about how to stretch national interests and preferences, temporally as well as spatially, so as to produce in greater quantities the public goods that the political market place of inter-State behaviour would otherwise underproduce. The United Nations, with its near-universal membership, its comprehensive mandate, a span of activities that ranges from the normative to the operational, and an institutional presence that is at once global, regional and country-based, can and should be at the very centre of this endeavour.

3. On 17 December 1996, Member States did me great honour in electing me the Organization's seventh Secretary-General. Since taking office, I have had one overriding objective: to induce greater unity of purpose, coherence of efforts and responsiveness throughout the Organization so that it can more effectively help meet the challenges of our times. Each of the component entities that constitute the United Nations has made adjustments to the epochal changes of the past decade, and their progress during this past year is summarized in these pages. As we go forward, however, the Organization must learn to make far better use of its major potential source of institutional strength: the many complementarities and synergies that exist within it. The comprehensive package of reforms that I presented to the General Assembly on 16 July 1997, and which the Assembly will consider at its current session, was designed with that aim in mind.

4. This—my first—annual report on the work of the Organization proceeds as follows. The remainder of this introduction briefly highlights some of the key forces that are transforming the world around the United Nations and, therefore, its agenda. Chapter II presents an overview of the Organization's activities of the past year, with a thematic emphasis on how the different programme areas have sought to adapt to and guide those forces in keeping with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the programme priorities set by Member States. In chapter III, I offer some overall reflections on the work of the Organization, and I indicate how and why my proposals for institutional reform constitute a necessary next step in ensuring that the Organization remains a vital and effective instrument of international collaboration as the world heads into a new century—and a new millennium.

5. The diverse ramifications of the end of the cold war remain a palpable factor in the world even today, nearly a decade later. The cessation of super-Power rivalry and military confrontation set in train a whole host of progressive changes within and among countries. At the same time, the international community is still struggling with the adverse consequences of bipolarity's collapse. The inter-ethnic conflicts that followed the break-up of several multi-ethnic States, whether in Central Asia or the former Yugoslavia, are tragic cases in point. Some of the former proxy battlegrounds of the cold war in Asia and Africa continue to reel from instability. States that were held together by their perceived strategic utility to one side or the other in some instances have suffered grievously as a result; this was true, for example, in the Horn of Africa earlier in the decade, and most recently in the former Zaire. The help of all States, especially those that played leading roles in the cold war, is necessary to undo its remaining social, economic and political distortions.

6. A second fundamental force reshaping the world today is globalization; it is perhaps the most profound source of international transformation since the industrial revolution began to turn external trade into a routine

feature of international life. Beginning in the 1960s, with the limited lifting of capital controls and the gradual emergence of multinational manufacturing firms, financial markets have become increasingly integrated and the production of goods and services transnationalized. Numbers tell part of the story: international financial flows tower over world trade by a ratio of 60:1, while the growth in world trade itself typically exceeds the increase in world gross domestic product by more than 5 per cent each year. The other part of the story is in the organization of these flows: they take place within markets which, for most purposes, have become single markets, and within firms or among related parties that treat the world, synoptically, as a single market place.

7. Globalization and the liberalization that produced it have generated a sustained period of economic expansion, together with the most rapid reconfiguration of international economic geography ever. Unprecedented wealth and standards of living exist in the industrialized world. Elsewhere, some countries that struggled with poverty a mere generation ago are now economic growth poles in their own right. Over the course of the next generation, a majority of the world's most rapidly growing economies will be located in what is now the developing world.

8. Globalization also poses numerous policy challenges, however. Among them are the inherent risks of markets lacking critical regulatory safeguards, as is true in some respects of international financial markets. Globalization is also eroding the efficacy of some policy instruments by which the industrialized countries had pursued full employment and social stability throughout the era that followed the Second World War. No consensus exists yet about how to replace the neo-Keynesian compromise that governed the political economy of advanced capitalism, but it would be folly to believe that the public in the industrialized countries is prepared simply to return to an era of unfettered market forces.

9. Additional policy challenges face the developing countries. To begin with, the benefits of globalization still affect relatively few among them. Some 40 per cent of the direct foreign investment flows to developing countries is accounted for by China alone; East Asia as a whole absorbs nearly two thirds. In contrast, Africa is the recipient of a meagre 4 per cent, while official development assistance has fallen. Among the countries bypassed by global capital flows are those that are experiencing the most enduring poverty. As indicated in the 1997 Human Development Report, published by the United Nations Development Programme, lack of global financial resources is no impediment to eradicating extreme poverty. Pro-growth policies at the national level coupled with targeted external assistance can enable currently marginalized countries to become active participants in the global economy. I consider it to be a core mission of the United Nations to help facilitate their successful transitions.

10. Furthermore, developing countries are in the difficult position of having to realign the character of their state apparatus in several directions simultaneously. The growing recognition that the State is not itself a creator of wealth has led to widespread privatization and deregulation, but even in market-oriented developing countries the State has critical roles to play in providing an enabling environment for sustainable development. The World Bank's 1997 World Development Report shows systematically how crucial an effective State is in this regard, as evidence from the so-called newly industrializing countries had suggested for some time. Finding the appropriate balance, however, especially in contexts where civil society is weak and transnational forces overpowering, is an exceedingly complex task. Various United Nations "good governance" programmes are designed to assist individual Governments in defining the balance that best meets their needs.

11. Third, globalization rests on and is sustained by a remarkable revolution in its own right in information technology, particularly the integration of increasingly powerful computers with telecommunication systems that permit high-volume and high-quality real-time voice and data transmissions. Indeed, the adjective "global" refers less to a place than to a space defined by electronic flows and a state of mind. World currency markets are the most global of all in this sense, and what has come to be known as the global factory relies similarly on such electronic infrastructure.

12. The information revolution has unfolded most extensively in the industrialized world, but it also holds enormous potential for the developing countries. It diminishes the constraints of distance in manufacturing industry and many services, and offers new tools in the form of administrative capacities, long-distance learning, telemedicine, the more effective management of micro-credit systems, and agricultural production, and for a variety of other applications. Major efforts should be undertaken to support greater acquisition and utilization of information technologies by the developing countries.

13. The intensification of global environmental interdependencies constitutes yet a fourth transformative force. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the

international community endorsed the concept of sustainable development as the key to reconciling economic and social progress, which all desire, with safeguarding the planet's ecosystems, on which all depend. Many of these systems are under increasing stress, however, with adverse consequences that range from the local destructiveness of flash floods resulting from deforestation, to the slower but globally indivisible atmospheric warming that results from increased emissions of greenhouse gases. As witnessed by the "Rio +5" summit, however, held at United Nations Headquarters in June 1997, progress since Rio has been disappointing, whether in meeting targets for controlling environmental degradation or in providing technological and financial assistance to developing countries. We hope for a more favourable outcome at the Kyoto session, later this year, of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

14. A fifth fundamental shift in the world today is the pronounced transnational expansion of civil society, itself made possible by a combination of political and technological changes. This is of great significance for the United Nations. Private investment capital exceeds by a factor of six the available official development assistance and must be further mobilized for development purposes. In recent years, the United Nations has found that much of its work at the country level, be it in humanitarian affairs, economic and social development, public health or the promotion of human rights, intimately involves the diverse and dedicated contributions of nongovernmental organizations and groups. In response to these growing manifestations of an ever more robust global civil society, the United Nations is equipping itself to engage civil society and make it a true partner in its work. As part of my reform proposals, I have urged all United Nations entities to be open to and work closely with civil society organizations that are active in their respective sectors, and to facilitate increased consultation and cooperation between the United Nations and such organizations.

15. Sixth, and closely related, there is a growing trend towards democratization and respect for human rights. Countries in all parts of the world are voluntarily limiting the arbitrary powers of state agencies together with the abuses and the social and economic costs they engender. Some 120 countries now hold generally free and fair elections, the highest total in history. The social, economic and political benefits of basing systems of rule on the principles of human dignity and the will of the people are felt in domestic as well as regional peace and prosperity, though the transition to democracy itself is often slow and at times fraught with difficulty.

16. The same technological means that foster globalization and the transnational expansion of civil society also provide the infrastructure for expanding global networks of "uncivil society"—organized crime, drug traffickers, money launderers and terrorists. These parasitic elements constitute a seventh factor shaping the international agenda today. They corrupt local and in some instances national politics, undermine judiciaries and pose security threats even to the most powerful States. I have moved rapidly to consolidate in a high-profile office at Vienna all United Nations efforts to combat these elements, but a redoubling of resolve is still necessary for them to be controlled, involving new partnerships among national and international agencies.

17. Finally, and somewhat paradoxically, these integrative trends are accompanied by tendencies towards fragmentation. In some instances, what appears to be fragmentation is in fact a move towards decentralization in policy-making and administration due to the desire for greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, thus posing no grounds for concern. In other cases, as noted above, fragmentation has been a by-product of the collapse of bipolarity and has led to intra-communal strife and conflict. Economic globalization, too, has brought about instances of fragmentation because market forces can and often do undermine indigenous cultural values. Indeed, the broad uncertainties and insecurities engendered by fundamental change frequently result in a heightened quest to redefine and reassert collective identities.

18. At their best, identity politics provide a robust sense of social coherence and civic pride, which have salutary effects for economic development and the peaceful resolution of disputes at home and abroad. At their worst, however, identity politics result in the vilification of "the other", whether that other is a different ethnic or tribal group, a different religion or a different nationality.

19. This particularistic and exclusionary form of identity politics has intensified in recent years within and among countries. It is responsible for some of the most egregious violations of international humanitarian law and, in several instances, of elementary standards of humanity: genocidal violence; the conscious targeting of civilian populations, often women and children, by factional combatants; rape as a deliberate instrument of organized terror; and attacks on emergency relief workers and missions. Negative forms of identity politics are a potent and potentially explosive force. Great care must be taken to recognize, confront and restrain them lest they destroy the potential for peace and progress that the new era holds in store.

20. Times of transformation can be times of confusion. The policy-making process can easily get caught in transition traps, moments of discontinuity when taking the wrong step can have severe long-term consequences. The international community has an obligation to itself and to succeeding generations to strengthen the available multilateral mechanisms, among which the United Nations is a unique instrument of concerted action, so as to successfully harness the mutual benefits of change while managing its adverse effects. By adopting the proposals for reform I submitted to the General Assembly in July, Member States will equip the United Nations to better play its part in meeting this challenge.

### **Managing change**

21. Throughout the 1990s, all parts of the United Nations have continuously adapted their strategies and programmes to the new and fluid international context, with the aim of supporting and anticipating the needs of Member States. A thematic overview of achievements in the main areas of activity during the past year follows.

#### *A. Good governance, human rights and democratization*

22. It is increasingly recognized that good governance is an essential building block for meeting the objectives of sustainable development, prosperity and peace. The situation of no two countries is precisely alike in this respect but, broadly speaking, and making due allowance for cultural differences, good governance comprises the rule of law, effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs, respect for human rights, and the meaningful participation of all citizens in the political processes of their countries and in decisions affecting their lives.

23. At its resumed fiftieth session, in 1996, the General Assembly reviewed the question how to redefine and, where needed, redesign public sector institutions in the light of new global economic and social challenges, some of which were discussed above. The United Nations Secretariat and United Nations programmes and funds have moved to provide extensive governance-related support to large numbers of developing countries and to countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. This takes the form of analytical work, diagnostic research, needs assessment, policy advice, technical assistance and advisory services. Support is provided to strengthen the functioning of specific institutions, such as judiciaries, parliaments and electoral bodies, as well as Sectorally, including public sector financial management, privatization efforts, information technology, civil service reforms and the empowerment of civil society organizations.

24. For example, believing that sustainable prosperity and stability cannot be achieved without good governance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been increasing the funds dedicated to this priority area: it now accounts for more than one third of all UNDP allocations. In July 1997, UNDP convened the first ever International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity, bringing to United Nations Headquarters elected officials, judges and community leaders from more than 100 countries. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), reflecting the growing reliance of national Governments on local authorities, has focused increasingly on strengthening local capacity and promoting community participation. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) also operates a governance programme, promoting strategies for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Through UNIFEM support for women's political participation in Africa, for example, women candidates for public office have learned how to design effective campaign and media strategies. Similarly, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs has supported training programmes for women both as voters and as electoral officials and candidates.

25. Post-conflict situations entail particular needs. It is our view that measures to strengthen capacity for governance must permeate national and international responses to emergency situations, and should begin as early as possible. Successful recovery from the dislocations produced by conflict is aided by moving rapidly towards meeting broad development challenges as well as creating adequate legal frameworks, judiciaries, law enforcement systems, stable social and political environments and economic opportunities.

26. Expanding and enhancing the exchange of knowledge and experiences among developing countries is of growing importance. The United Nations Secretariat will facilitate this process through its capacity as a clearing house for information and research on public administration. As resources like the Internet and the World Wide Web become increasingly available globally, various sources of information and expertise can be more readily accessed, while new and productive linkages and networks with the regional commissions, professional organizations and nongovernmental organizations are more easily established.

27. Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations places the promotion of respect for human rights among the central purposes of the Organization. Increasingly in recent years, human rights have also come to be seen as an integral element of good governance.

28. The core human rights activities of the Organization took on renewed strength after the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. Prior activities had focused largely on standard setting and the formal adoption of standards at the national level. The Vienna Declaration placed human rights in the context of development and democracy while reaffirming their universality. Together with the establishment of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, this has made it possible to approach human rights activities in practical as well as principled terms from a truly global perspective.

29. The United Nations instituted a major restructuring this year in the organization of the human rights secretariat at Geneva. In my July reform plans I went further, consolidating the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights, thereby ensuring cohesion and consistency in priorities and activities. I am immensely pleased that the President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, is joining us as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and I know that she will work tirelessly and with sensitivity in the cause of universal human rights.

30. This past year has seen a dramatic increase in activities relating to the establishment of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Their aim is to strengthen the protection of the individual by providing access to remedies for human rights violations, including in circumstances where the more traditional institutions of protection, such as the judiciary, are not available, do not function effectively or are otherwise inaccessible. Some 15 projects currently assist Member States in this area. Additional projects are aimed at supporting regional arrangements, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. These activities are typically undertaken in tandem with other United Nations entities, such as UNDP, and coincide with their efforts to promote good governance and sustainable development.

31. There has also been a pronounced increase in the involvement of human rights activities in field operations, directly reflecting decisions to that effect taken by the Security Council. Depending on the needs of the situation, these activities combine monitoring of human rights violations, education, training and other advisory services, and confidence-building measures. Currently, such operations exist in Abkhazia/Georgia, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Guatemala, Haiti, Malawi, Mongolia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

32. The human rights programme continues to address violations of human rights. Threats to the right to life and physical integrity, including extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, threats to freedom of expression and movement and to freedom from arbitrary arrest, and threats to the independence of the judiciary continue to be the focus of United Nations action. The persistence of such violations has led us to target our activities more directly at specific areas where the violations are committed. Accordingly, advisory services and technical assistance have been made available to Governments to strengthen their judiciary, train law enforcement officials and assist with law reform. Training programmes for the administration of the justice sector, and advisory services for law reform, coupled with support for establishing national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, now make up over 80 per cent of the activities of advisory services in the human rights area.

33. As at July 1997, there were 191 States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that the vast majority of children are now citizens of countries that have made legally binding commitments to promote and protect their human rights. Nevertheless, such practices as the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography remain critical problem areas and are addressed by a Special Rapporteur. The implementation of the Plan of Action on the rights of the child, recently developed by the High Commissioner, is an essential next step.

34. According to the 1997 report of UNICEF, *The Progress of Nations*, violence against women and girls is the most pervasive violation of human rights in the world today. It transcends the usual distinctions among countries based on such factors as national income. UNIFEM has developed a global women's human rights programme, focused on mainstreaming the rights of women, combating and eliminating violence against them, and strengthening women's knowledge and use of their human rights. Particular attention is devoted to securing universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the women's "bill of rights".



35. In a related area, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) advocates and supports through its country programmes internationally agreed goals concerning reproductive rights, sexual relations and childbearing. The Fund has sponsored a variety of media and other public education campaigns during the past year. It also prepared a programming framework for eradicating female genital mutilation, which has already met with success in a community-based advocacy programme in Uganda.

36. The year 1998 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the General Assembly will review progress in the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The appointment in 1997 of a new High Commissioner, and the drawing up of the medium-term plan for 1998-2001, provide additional impetus to making this the era in which human rights are universally accepted as inherent to the promotion of peace, security, economic prosperity and social equity.

37. The trend towards democratization has been accelerating for some time. Democratic processes continue to be strengthened in Latin America and the Caribbean. Progress has also been marked in Africa. As I noted in my address to the annual Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in June, the view that military coups against democratically elected Governments by self-appointed juntas are not acceptable has become an established norm. Africa is also experimenting with new constitutional formulas and forms of governing in multi-ethnic States, as illustrated by Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali and South Africa.

38. The value that Member States attach to democratization is reflected in the large number of requests the United Nations receives for electoral assistance—no fewer than 80 in the past five years. United Nations electoral assistance seeks in the first instance to enhance the effectiveness of international observers in making assessments regarding the legitimacy of an electoral process and its outcome, and to recommend election-related policy changes through dialogue with the Government, political parties and civil society. The international observation of recent elections in Algeria, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Yemen has been supported in this manner. Recognizing the need to foster the sustainability of local democratic institutions, the United Nations also emphasizes the importance of building the domestic institutional capacity of Member States in constitutional and electoral law reforms and strengthening Governments' own institutional capacities to organize elections. During the last year, such assistance has been provided to Bangladesh, the Comoros, the Gambia, Guyana, Haiti, Liberia, Mali and Mexico.

39. In the long run, the transition to sustained democratic consolidation requires promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights, creation of free media, tolerance of opposition and an independent civil society. The experience of El Salvador and Nicaragua shows that the United Nations can help such democratic processes to take root even in difficult conditions. In Haiti, the United Nations activities have assisted in maintaining an environment in which security and basic freedoms may be established.

40. With a view to strengthening cooperation on issues of democratization and good governance, the Secretariat in the coming year will undertake a series of consultations on lessons learned in constitutionalism, governance in multi-ethnic States and related topics, aimed at distilling insights for future activities.

41. In sum, despite setbacks and difficulties, progress is being made in transitions towards good governance, human rights and democratization. This augurs well for the achievement of critical national and international policy objectives, as well as for the aims and aspirations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

### *B. International economic cooperation and sustainable development*

42. Competent, accountable and responsive state institutions are one building block for the achievement of significant progress towards prosperity and stability. A conducive and supportive international economic environment is equally important, however, and fostering such an environment is a core element of the Organization's mission.

43. Two major events of the past year, both in June 1997, concern the work of the Organization in international economic and social cooperation. The first was the adoption by the General Assembly of its Agenda for Development. The second was the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, convened to review the implementation of Agenda 21, the global plan of action for sustainable development adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Both have implications for the substance as well as the organization of United Nations activities in this domain.

44. The Agenda for Development not only addresses conventional development issues but also stresses the mutually supportive though complex relationships among development, peace, democracy, good governance and human rights. It affirms the United Nations role in the field of development, and identifies ways of reinforcing the capacities and effectiveness of the United Nations system in that field.

45. The special session of the Assembly occasioned a sober reflection on the limited progress that has been achieved in implementing the agreements reached at the Rio Conference. In addition, the special session marked the first such review of global conferences convened by the United Nations in recent years. It is envisaged that similar reviews will take place of the other conferences. Taken together, the lessons gained from these reviews will inform and help shape national and international policy into the next century.

46. As noted in the introduction, the economic context for development has undergone substantial change in recent years. At the national level, liberalization and economic reform have been the predominant trends in the 1990s, while internationally globalization has been the driving force. Both dimensions have been the subject of sustained attention by the Secretariat and the respective intergovernmental bodies. For example, in the 1997 World Economic and Social Survey it is suggested that all developing countries and countries with economies in transition need to raise per capita income by at least 3 per cent annually in order to make progress in reducing unemployment and alleviating poverty. To achieve those levels of growth, the report contends, the less affluent countries in particular require a more conducive external economic environment than now exists for them, an issue discussed in depth by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997.

47. Unfavourable trends in official development assistance cast a serious shadow over the development prospects of lower-income countries. Most African and a number of other vulnerable countries are unlikely to reap the benefits of their recent economic reforms without the sustained support of the international community. The past year has nevertheless seen some encouraging initiatives, many resulting from the new global partnership proposed by the major industrialized countries at their summit meeting at Lyon, in June 1996. They include the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" proposed by the United States of America, the Swedish "Partnership Africa", and the planned successor to the fourth Lome Convention concluded between the European Community and African, Caribbean and Pacific States. An important task for the United Nations in the years ahead will be to develop new forms of partnership between developed and developing countries—partnerships that meet the needs and aspirations of developing countries and are also consistent with global economic conditions and attitudes.

48. In the area of international trade, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has repositioned itself for this challenge. In the past year, it has refocused its policy analysis work, intergovernmental deliberations and operational activities. UNCTAD is examining the relationship between globalization and development, together with ways of promoting the effective integration of all developing countries into the international trading system. It is supporting efforts by developing countries to improve their investment climate, increase their technological capacities, and identify and exploit opportunities for enterprise development. At the same time, UNCTAD remains deeply involved with capacity-building in the least developed countries. Paralleling these programmatic changes, the UNCTAD intergovernmental and secretariat structures have been substantially streamlined, the number of meetings cut, staff size reduced and considerable savings achieved.

49. The regional commissions also have been re-examining their work programmes. For example, the Economic Commission for Europe is addressing the consequences of the accession of central European countries to the European Union, the transition processes of countries in south-eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and several transboundary issues, including border-crossing, energy and transport infrastructures, and the environment. The Economic Commission for Africa has focused on regional trade and investment concerns, particularly on post-Uruguay Round challenges and opportunities for Africa. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia has curtailed some of its activities, notably in agriculture and industry, while expanding its endeavours in such other areas as water resources development, energy and transport. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean pursued a variety of analytic and policy issues in the past year, including the compatibility between preferential trade agreements and a more open international trading system. It also instituted several reform measures, among which is a pilot scheme to establish a clearer and enhanced accountability on the part of its secretariat vis-a-vis the Commission in exchange for greater delegation of authority and flexibility. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, at its April session, committed itself to streamlining the Commission, and pledged to make it a vital centre of research and other development activities for the region, especially for those countries in which widespread poverty lingers.

50. Much of the recent work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies has focused on translating into action the plans and programmes agreed upon at the global conferences held earlier in the decade. In addition to the special session of the General Assembly on "Rio +5", the 1997 meetings of the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women concerned follow-up issues to the conferences held at Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing.

51. Similarly, the Secretariat's work programme in each of these areas was oriented towards the priorities identified at the conferences and the subsequent sessions of the Commissions. To cite but one illustration, the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality met for the first time in October 1996, chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women. The Committee is charged with promoting gender mainstreaming and coordinating the response of the United Nations system to the Beijing Conference and other United Nations conferences and summits.

52. Improvements in data collection and dissemination have been an important dimension of the United Nations system's conference follow-up. In the past year the Statistics Division has produced, in cooperation with the Population Division and the European Union, revised recommendations on statistics of international migration and, in cooperation with the regional commissions and the European Union, the principles and recommendations for population and housing censuses. The collection, updating and improved dissemination of more traditional data remain important aspects of the Organization's work. Thus, the 1996 revision of the official United Nations population estimates and projections showed slower world population growth, lower levels of fertility, more diverse trends in mortality and increased migration flows during the first half of the 1990s than in prior decades. The revision also documented the devastating mortality effects of the AIDS pandemic, particularly for Africa.

53. The Organization continues to take advantage of improvements in technology to enhance the dissemination of information. For example, the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics is now available on the World Wide Web. The Population Information Network serves as a repository of population data and information, and has also assisted developing countries in creating population information sites on the Internet. Similarly, the Division for the Advancement of Women, together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, initiated an Internet space, Women-watch, on global women's issues. Linkages and partnerships with a network of non-governmental organizations promote accelerated action by civil society to advance the status of women and their human rights.

54. Sustainable development is a fundamental challenge facing humanity as it enters the twenty-first century: how to provide for the needs of a growing world population without destroying the natural resource base on which it depends. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development mapped out a detailed plan for achieving sustainable, long-term development. The work of the United Nations on sustainable development during the past year was focused, in large part, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly.

55. At that session, the General Assembly made it clear that developed countries must significantly strengthen their financial and technological support to developing countries if the latter are to mobilize national resources in pursuit of global environmental goals. The Assembly agreed to continue a political process under the Commission on Sustainable Development on the subject of forests, including consideration of an instrument, possibly legally binding, intended to ensure sustainability. It also decided to initiate intergovernmental discussions on the problems of freshwater scarcity and the energy sector.

56. No agreement was expected, nor was any reached, on the issue of climate change, but the special session did raise public and political awareness of the need to address this issue through a cooperative strategy, and to bridge the key gaps in the political consensus needed to strengthen the principal instrument of that strategy, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The next step is for the developed countries to adopt legally binding commitments to limit and reduce their emissions of gases that contribute to global warming. This is the main objective of the next session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held at Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997. Ultimately, the Convention's objective of stabilizing global greenhouse gases at "safe" levels cannot be achieved by the developed countries alone, but will also require the cooperation of developing countries.

57. The first edition of the Global Environment Outlook was published by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) early in 1997. It notes that over the last decade the state of the global environment has continued to deteriorate and that significant environmental problems remain deeply embedded in the socio-

economic fabric of countries in all regions. While some progress is reported in curbing pollution and resource degradation, worsening trends are found in areas ranging from emissions of toxic substances and greenhouse gases to natural resource degradation and desertification.

58. Mindful of these trends, the Governing Council of UNEP, at its nineteenth session, adopted measures to strengthen the Programme's work in environmental monitoring, assessment and early warning. Agreements were also reached on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities; on measures to reduce the risks to human health from hazardous chemicals; and on action to reduce persistent organic pollutants. Progress has been made on these issues in 1997.

59. The accelerating process of urbanization affects all dimensions of sustainable development. The seriousness of this issue animated the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul in 1996. Over the past year, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements increased its support to developing countries for shelter and services, urban management and policy reforms, and devising guidelines and indicators by which to measure progress towards achieving adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. As requested by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Settlements at its session in May 1997 reviewed and adapted its working methods so as to involve organizations of local authorities and other relevant groups in civil society, especially the private sector.

60. The Agenda for Development and the special session of the General Assembly, as well as related activities at the intergovernmental level, have all stressed—and the Organization's work programme in these areas has experienced—the multifaceted and intersectoral nature of the concerns at hand. This poses a major institutional challenge: how most effectively to service them at the level of the Secretariat. What is required is not merely more efficient administrative support. Of even greater importance is better integrating the Organization's analytical, normative and operational functions, and enhancing the relevance of its analytical and normative work for policy formulation and action.

61. It was with these aims in mind that I decided to merge the three Secretariat departments in the economic and social spheres into one Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The new consolidated Department will be far better equipped to perform its complex functions in an integrated manner. The merger will also yield efficiency savings, which I am proposing to dedicate to the development account that I recommended to Member States as part of my July reform plans.

### *C. Development operations*

62. Gross disparities continue to characterize the world today—in income, access to services, and opportunities to lead a life worthy of human dignity. The challenge of development remains profound, and the condition of poverty profoundly disturbing. Meeting the challenge requires enhanced support to developing countries, quite apart from creating conducive domestic and international contexts.

63. The United Nations has forged a global agenda specifying the many dimensions of development, and has devised plans to implement agreed objectives. The tasks are immense, however, and the available resources have become stagnant. United Nations development programmes and funds have, therefore, sought ways to stretch available resources by coordinating their strategic resource allocation, beginning with the harmonization of programme cycles in 1996, and by collaborating more extensively at the country level.

64. To accelerate this process, and building on its success, one of the most consequential of my July reform proposals is the creation of a United Nations Development Group. Chaired by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the Group also comprises UNICEF and UNFPA, with other entities participating as warranted by their interests and mandates. The United Nations Development Group is structured so as to maintain and reinforce the distinctive nature of its constituent units, while facilitating their functioning in a more unified, cooperative and coherent framework at the headquarters level and in the field. It holds great promise of amplifying the impact of United Nations development activities.

65. From 132 field offices serving more than 170 countries, the United Nations Development Programme fosters policies and capacities for poverty eradication and sustainable human development. During 1996, UNDP implemented a new resource allocation formula whereby nearly 90 per cent of its core funds of some \$850 million are assigned to low-income countries. Its core resources are augmented by some \$1.2 million in restricted funds and cost-sharing arrangements. The Programme's primary focus continues to be on building national capacity for poverty eradication and the creation of employment and sustainable livelihoods. Projects in the past year involved more than 80 countries, and included support for economic management (36 countries in Africa),

the design and implementation of national poverty reduction programmes (China, India, Mongolia and 23 African countries), restructuring public expenditures (Burkina Faso) and monitoring the impact of economic reform on vulnerable groups (Mongolia). In 1997-1998, the resources devoted to gender mainstreaming activities are being increased to one fifth of core funds.

66. In the area of environment and development, UNDP in 1996 supported the efforts of developing countries to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as well as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and it secured \$47 million from the Global Environmental Facility for new activities related to the environmental needs of developing countries.

67. In 1996, UNDP began a Poverty Strategies Initiative. Many of the projects assist national partners to assess the magnitude and distribution of poverty nationwide, through household surveys and similar means. UNDP country offices are supporting the preparation of national human development reports, complementing the global Human Development Report. As of 1996, more than 50 countries had produced such reports; by the end of 1997 approximately 100 countries will have done so. These reports help to frame national anti-poverty campaigns and serve as a basis for monitoring their progress.

68. The United Nations Children's Fund is another core member of the newly constituted United Nations Development Group. In 1996, total UNICEF expenditures were \$921 million, fully one third of which originated from nongovernmental or private sources. Approximately 70 per cent of programme expenditures went to the care and protection of children in low-income countries, which in turn account for 70 per cent of the world's child population. Africa and Asia combined received some two thirds of total expenditures. Health was by far the leading sector of programme activity, followed by roughly equal emphases on education, nutrition and providing clean water supplies and sanitation services.

69. The Fund is an active and often leading participant in cooperative ventures within the wider United Nations context. Among the many notable examples is its work to prevent and treat the main causes of childhood illness and death, such as acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria, measles and malnutrition. UNICEF and the World Health Organization have promoted an integrated approach to the prevention and management of such childhood illnesses. UNICEF also cooperates with several international and national agencies in working towards the reduction of maternal mortality. A number of countries, notably Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali, Romania and Viet Nam, have, as a result of these efforts, initiated programmes that combine improved training of midwives, better access to family planning and women's health services, and improved emergency obstetric care.

70. The third core member of the United Nations Development Group is the United Nations Population Fund. Pledged contributions remained just above \$300 million in 1996. Some 47 new country programmes were formulated in that year. UNFPA focuses on three main programme areas: reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. The Fund is especially concerned with helping countries to institutionalize the concept of reproductive health in national population programmes, and to integrate such programmes into primary health care systems. It has also stepped up its efforts in the area of adolescent reproductive health.

71. The World Food Programme (WFP) is a dual mandate agency, working in both emergency humanitarian relief and development operations. Roughly one third of its total resources of \$ 1.4 billion is devoted to development. In 1996, new commitments available for development purposes were significantly lower than in previous years. Nevertheless, WFP development assistance reached more than 20 million people, in the form of human resource development projects as well as infrastructure and agricultural or rural development projects. Some 40 per cent of the beneficiaries were in sub-Saharan Africa, with another third in the Asia and Pacific region.

72. Africa receives the major share of assistance because WFP concentrates resources on the poorest people in the neediest countries; in all, some 30 sub-Saharan countries received assistance. At the same time, there has been progress in that region. Ethiopia, a recent recipient of both emergency relief and development assistance, produced a grain surplus last year that it exported to neighbouring Kenya and Somalia. Agricultural production in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mauritius has increased an average of 4 per cent annually in recent years, compared to the overall sub-Saharan average of 2 per cent.

73. The development activities of WFP in the Asia and Pacific region centre largely on enabling poor rural people to improve their food security. This includes supporting self-help training and credit schemes for poor women (Bangladesh); strengthening the capacity of rural communities in selecting and implementing local

infrastructure and income-generating projects (China, India and Nepal); rehabilitation programmes for war-affected people (Cambodia); and nutrition and health support for vulnerable groups (India and Viet Nam).

74. In Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP has assisted efforts by Governments and local communities to provide the poorest households with improved access to productive resources, and to give direct dietary support through targeted interventions in primary health care, and also in pre-school and primary education.

75. Several other organizations contribute significantly to the United Nations development efforts. Among them is the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Its development-related work supports programmes to strengthen women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers. Key aspects of this work include supporting the inception and growth of international networks—such as the International Coalition on Women and Credit, which advocates gender-sensitive approaches to the extension of micro-credit. Regional initiatives also receive support. One case in point is the Self-Employed Women's Association, which was enabled by UNIFEM support to strengthen its ultimately successful campaign for an International Labour Organization convention on home-based workers. UNIFEM also supports women's efforts to organize the production and marketing of goods and services.

76. The devastating impact of HIV/AIDS is a serious impediment to the development prospects of a number of low-income countries. The mission of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is to lead, strengthen and support an expanded United Nations response to the epidemic, aimed at preventing transmission, providing care and support, reducing individual and community vulnerability, and alleviating its impact. At the country level, UNAIDS has supported the establishment of United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS, designed to coordinate United Nations efforts in support of national responses to HIV/AIDS. The sharing of experiences and expertise between countries is critical, as is the need for increased inter-country collaboration on the many HIV/AIDS issues that cut across borders. Accordingly, UNAIDS has set up small intercountry teams at Abidjan, Bangkok and Pretoria that are working closely with the co-sponsoring agencies to develop and consolidate technical resource networks and enhance national capacity for HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

77. In sum, the various development organizations of the United Nations pursue ambitious agendas because they face enormous challenges, but they are obliged to pursue those agendas with quite limited resources. My aim in establishing the United Nations Development Group is to augment the impact of those resources through forging closer collaboration among the constituent units at the strategic level and in field operations, enhancing the overall effort by focusing on core competencies and by sharing common premises and services.

#### *D. Preventive diplomacy, peaceful settlement of disputes and disarmament*

78. The assurance that members will not resort to violence but will settle their disputes in some other way is the cornerstone of all well-ordered societies. Zones characterized by such dependable expectations of peaceful change exist in all parts of the world today—though they coexist with instances of violent conflict among and within States. It is a primary aim of the United Nations to expand the domain of peaceful change, by providing means through which conflicts may be contained and resolved and by dealing with their root causes.

79. The prevention of conflict both within and between States requires, first of all, ongoing attention to possible sources of tension and prompt action to ensure that tension does not evolve into conflict. During the past year, the Secretariat, in cooperation with other branches of the United Nations system, has worked to strengthen its global watch, which is designed to detect threats to international peace and security, enabling the Security Council to carry out or to foster preventive action.

80. Cooperation with regional organizations offers great potential. Close contacts with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are a case in point. The two secretariats engage in almost daily consultations. The appointment of a joint United Nations/OAU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, Mr. Mohamed Sahnoun, whose mandate and activities have been extended to other countries in central Africa, is a further manifestation of that cooperation. There is also increased cooperation between the United Nations and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community.

81. Elsewhere, the United Nations continues to work closely with the Organization of American States, particularly in Haiti where the jointly fielded International Civilian Mission continues to do its work. The same is true of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe in the areas of human rights, electoral assistance, peacemaking and economic development. We will continue to build upon these

positive experiences to promote a more rational and cost-effective division of labour between the world organization and regional entities, thereby bringing life to the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

82. The contrasting experience during the past year of two neighbouring countries in Central Asia underlines the fact that progress in resolving disputes hinges on certain conditions. The signing of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, though it has not fully prevented fighting, demonstrated the desire of the Tajik disputants to settle their differences peacefully. It also reflected the readiness of some key countries, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, to use their influence on the disputants to bring this about. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, despite the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission, backed by appeals from the Security Council, the warring parties have shown little interest in a peaceful solution. They have continued to wage a brutal and futile civil war. What is more, they have been encouraged by some Member States which continue to provide them with political and military assistance. All the while, the unremitting suffering of the people of Afghanistan worsens. I decided in July of this year to intensify United Nations efforts to help bring an end to the strife in Afghanistan by dispatching Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi to make a fresh assessment and to recommend possible roles for the Organization.

83. I deeply regret that the absence of will to coexist peacefully and the readiness, on the part of some elements, to change a negotiated political order through violence have led to serious regression in two countries where the United Nations had played a major role in restoring stability after years of civil war. The coup d'etat in Sierra Leone in May was a reprehensible action that rightly received vigorous condemnation throughout the continent and the international community. It greatly set back the chances of stability and development in a country that is in desperate need of both. In Cambodia, the fragile coalition that was the result of painstaking and costly international efforts was rocked by the violent events of July.

84. The interlocking problems and crises that engulfed the Great Lakes region of central Africa following the devastating human tragedy in Rwanda required a correspondingly integrated approach on the part of the United Nations. While a measure of stability was re-established in Rwanda itself, my Special Envoy, Mr. Sahnoun, became deeply involved in international efforts to cope with the unfolding crisis in eastern Zaire. The rebellion that began there culminated in the capture of Kinshasa and the establishment of a new Government, which renamed the country Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Sahnoun has collaborated with President Omar Bongo of Gabon in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Republic of the Congo, and he continues to lend his support to the efforts of former President Julius Nyerere of the United Republic of Tanzania to bring the political parties of Burundi to the negotiating table.

85. In response to the urgent need to address seriously charges that acts of genocide and violations of international humanitarian law had been committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I dispatched an investigative team to establish the facts. Ultimately, solutions to the deep-rooted and widespread problems of the region can be devised only by its own people. At the same time, the international community must respond fully to the requirements and aspirations of the region through a long-term commitment to assist and sustain peace efforts.

86. In recent months, I have also taken initiatives to revitalize flagging processes towards the settlement of three long-standing disputes: Western Sahara, Cyprus and East Timor. In each case, I appointed a high-level emissary to try to move the process out of its rut. In the case of Western Sahara, I requested Mr. James Baker III to assess, together with the parties, prospects for the implementation of the settlement plan and to provide me with his recommendations. He has carried out several rounds of consultations with the parties. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara remains in place to facilitate the implementation of a settlement.

87. To give new impetus to my mission of good offices in East Timor, I appointed Mr. Jamsheed Marker as my Personal Representative. He embarked on an intensive series of consultations with the Governments of Indonesia and Portugal on how best to reinvigorate the tripartite talks that had been held under the auspices of my predecessors since 1983. He also visited East Timor. On the basis of those discussions, I invited the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Portugal to a meeting in New York. I was encouraged by the assurances from the two Governments that the negotiations would be fruitful. I also believe it useful to continue the all-inclusive East Timorese dialogue, to enable the people of East Timor to contribute practical ideas in the search for a lasting solution.

88. The third area where I have tried to reactivate a previously moribund peace process is Cyprus, in which a long-standing United Nations peacekeeping presence has played an essential role in preventing the resumption of hostilities. I invited the leaders of the two communities to a series of face-to-face talks, their first in three years, under the chairmanship of my Special Adviser on Cyprus, Mr. Diego Cordovez. The first round was held outside New York in July, a second in Switzerland in August. Although it has not yet been possible to reach agreement on substantive matters, the two leaders remain committed to achieving an overall settlement under my good offices, and I intend to proceed with the mission.

89. Finally, the use of mandatory sanctions is a valuable tool available to the Security Council, permitting the United Nations to bring pressure to bear without recourse to force. However, concern has been expressed about the negative effects of such measures on the most vulnerable groups among the civilian population, as well as their collateral effects on other States. The oil-for-food programme in Iraq, which came into effect in December 1996 and was extended in June 1997, represents the first systematic attempt by the Council to address the humanitarian needs of a civilian population in a country remaining subject to sanctions. I shall encourage consideration by the General Assembly and the Security Council of possible ways to render sanctions a less blunt and more effective instrument.

90. In the past 12 months, significant progress in arms regulation and disarmament has been achieved through multilateral treaty-making, in several cases through the Conference on Disarmament. Treaties covering a wide range of weapons of mass destruction have been negotiated, extended or bolstered, or have entered into force. The new, institutionalized review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons commenced, the historic Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was concluded, the Chemical Weapons Convention came into force, and agreement was reached by the parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to intensify their efforts to negotiate verification provisions. There has been further consolidation of the various nuclear-weapon-free-zone arrangements, most of which now enjoy the full support of the nuclear-weapon States. The momentum that has been generated by these achievements should be maintained, in particular with a view to substantially reducing and ultimately eliminating the remaining nuclear stockpiles.

91. Notwithstanding these accomplishments, the absence of norms governing conventional weapons, especially light weapons and small arms, is of mounting concern. Little has been done to curb their rapidly escalating proliferation. This situation creates perverse chains of events. Member States ask the United Nations to deal with certain armed conflicts. In at least 15 such conflicts today the primary or sole tools of violence are small arms and light weapons. They are readily available on world markets. Indeed, there is intense competition to export these weapons, including to the conflict areas in which the United Nations is struggling to promote peace, thereby exacerbating the intensity and duration of those conflicts. The consequent losses of life and the displacement of people within countries and to neighbouring areas add, in turn, to the humanitarian crises that the United Nations is called upon to alleviate.

92. The challenge for the international community is to devise means to contain the spread of such weapons, especially to areas in conflict. One is through promoting the principle of openness and transparency in military matters. In this regard, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms enjoys the wide support of Member States and should be strengthened. The commendable initiative recently taken in West Africa to declare a moratorium on the export, import and production of light weapons is another constructive measure.

93. Finally, the efforts under way to ban antipersonnel landmines should be universally encouraged, and effective means to eliminate these vile weapons should be adopted at the earliest opportunity. Landmines have been described as weapons that do not get put away after a war; they remain in place to maim and kill—some 2,000 people every month, mostly civilians. Significant progress at last may be at hand. In the autumn of 1996 a group of countries, together with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, galvanized the pro-ban movement in what has become known as the Ottawa process. To date, as many as 117 States have stated publicly that they will sign an international treaty at Ottawa in December 1997 in support of a global ban on the manufacture, production, use and export of anti-personnel landmines. I strongly support this effort.

94. These and other new challenges of weapons proliferation make it necessary for the United Nations to revitalize its efforts in this domain. The fact that the world is no longer riven by super-Power rivalry makes it possible. Seizing the moment, I proposed in my July reform report the creation of a new Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation, which will return the United Nations to centre stage in limiting the destructiveness of conflicts by limiting the spread of the weapons that fuel them.



*E. Humanitarian action*

95. When the peaceful settlement of disputes fails—or is deliberately rejected as a policy option—and armed conflict ensues, the impact on other States is often felt first through a surge of refugees, or by concern with the plight of internally displaced and other war-affected persons. The total number of victims of man-made humanitarian disasters today is unquantifiable. Those who are physically displaced by conflicts are estimated at 40 million; they exceed the victims of natural disasters by perhaps as much as a factor of 10. It is the aim of United Nations humanitarian agencies to provide timely and effective assistance as well as protection to those in need, and to advocate adherence to humanitarian norms.

96. Humanitarian aid to persons affected by conflict is undertaken in contexts that are becoming increasingly complex, volatile and dangerous. Missions are carried out amid contested or collapsed state structures, the breakdown of law and order and of the support mechanisms of civil society, and outright civil war. This state of affairs makes it necessary to couple relief efforts with more comprehensive approaches that include promoting political settlement, rebuilding capacity and restoring economic opportunities. Ominously, in a growing number of instances civilian populations have become the explicit target of combatants, whether to achieve their forcible displacement, use them as shields, terrorize or annihilate them. Humanitarian missions similarly have been impeded or denied access for reasons of political expediency, manipulated as part of the strategic calculus of warring factions, or subjected to attacks. These distressing practices pose very serious policy and moral dilemmas that the international community must address and resolve.

97. The refugee population assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) declined during 1996, from 15.5 million to 13.2 million, owing in part to UNHCR efforts to secure voluntary repatriation but also, regrettably, to episodes of large-scale involuntary repatriation and evacuation, particularly in the Great Lakes region of central Africa. Internally displaced people now significantly outnumber refugees, with estimates ranging from 20 million to 25 million. UNHCR directly or indirectly assists nearly 5 million internally displaced persons and an equal number of former refugees and others who are in various stages of resettlement. The Emergency Relief Coordinator also serves victims of natural disasters.

98. The World Food Programme conducted a total of 57 relief operations in 1996, six of which (the Great Lakes region, Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia and the former Yugoslavia) accounted for more than two thirds of all relief aid provided. More than 15 million of the assisted victims were women and children, who are usually the first to experience the effects of hunger in the midst of political violence, drought or other disasters. UNICEF continued to focus its extensive humanitarian efforts on issues related to nutrition, health, sanitation and education for children in emergency situations. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights and UNICEF provided support for an important expert report to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on the impact of armed conflict on children, the most comprehensive analysis of the subject ever undertaken. The United Nations Population Fund concluded an agreement with UNHCR in the past year to provide emergency reproductive health care to displaced persons and refugees. In addition, UNAIDS produced guidelines for Governments and cooperating agencies, enabling them to adopt necessary measures to prevent the rapid epidemic spread of HIV in emergency settings and to care for those already affected.

99. The longest-standing United Nations humanitarian mission is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In addition to providing essential education, health, relief and social services to 3.4 million refugees, UNRWA has undertaken a range of projects aimed at developing infrastructure, improving living conditions and creating employment opportunities. The relocation of its headquarters from Vienna to Gaza in July 1996 helped strengthen the Agency's relationship with the Palestinian Authority. Yet the stagnation in donor contributions combined with the steady growth in the beneficiary population have led to a quantitative and qualitative decline in services.

100. Well after many conflict situations have passed, anti-personnel landmines remain a continuing humanitarian scourge. The Ottawa process, referred to in the previous section, aims to ban the manufacture, production and use of such mines, but the painstaking humanitarian work of reducing the dangers of existing mines must continue. Mine-awareness training and mine clearance, comprising technical surveys and verification, as well as minefield marking and eradication, require far greater resources. Training and skills transference are essential, in technical and management capacities alike.

101. The success of United Nations responses to complex emergencies and natural disasters depends critically on the availability of human, material and financial resources. Between September 1996 and August 1997, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs orchestrated 13 consolidated appeals on behalf of the United

Nations system, intended to serve the needs of approximately 17 million people in Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, the Chechnya region, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Great Lakes region, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslavia. The combined funding requirements for two appeals—for the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region—amounted to nearly half of the \$1.8 billion requested. A total of \$727 million has been pledged or carried over.

102. During the past year the United Nations system continued to improve its capacity to deliver humanitarian assistance. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has played a key role in this process. Progress was made in strengthening capabilities in early warning, contingency planning and information systems. For example, the main humanitarian agencies developed joint contingency planning methodologies, and undertook joint planning exercises in the Great Lakes region, West Africa and Central Asia.

103. To ensure predictability in collaboration, the main agencies have developed memoranda of understanding that delineate roles, maintain accountability and establish standby arrangements. Similarly, liaison between them and non-governmental organizations has become a more routine feature, both in the field and by means of monthly "interaction" meetings in New York and corresponding meetings at Geneva. In the case of the rapid deterioration of the situation in the Great Lakes region, a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator was appointed to take immediate responsibility for the strategic coordination of United Nations efforts in the entire area, including Burundi, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and the refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania.

104. With regard to resource mobilization, as part of a review by the Economic and Social Council, an extensive assessment of the consolidated appeals process was undertaken in 1996. That process seeks not only to coordinate but also to prioritize funding needs, and the review led to its being expanded so as to include longer-term rehabilitation objectives—for instance, reintegrating demobilized soldiers and refugees, strengthening the administrative capacity of the States involved, and fostering transition to development. Likewise, where appropriate the consolidated appeals process will include funding requirements for human rights field operations.

105. The growing interest and involvement of the Security Council in humanitarian questions is another welcome and timely development. It holds promise for a more fully integrated approach to conflict resolution in which all dimensions—political, humanitarian, development and human rights—are addressed in a mutually reinforcing manner.

106. Nevertheless, recent experience has shown that still more effective institutional arrangements are necessary. In particular, I considered the operational role of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to be problematic. The Department took on operational tasks in a limited and ad hoc manner without being adequately equipped for them, and that detracted from the Emergency Relief Coordinator's core functions of policy development, advocacy and coordinating humanitarian emergency responses. Accordingly, in my July reform proposals I announced that the Department would be replaced by a smaller Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, concerned exclusively with those core functions, and the Department's operational responsibilities transferred elsewhere. The reorganization is now under way.

107. As noted at the outset of this section, a distressing characteristic of certain recent conflict situations is that the pursuit of strategic advantage by combatants has begun to include, and thus manipulate, the humanitarian presence. Worse still, civilian populations have become direct targets, and humanitarian workers subjected to harassment, hostage-taking, rape, and even murder. The help of Member States is required to cope with this mounting assault on innocent lives and international norms. As a first step, the Security Council recently issued a firm condemnation of attacks against refugees and other civilians, and called upon parties to conflicts to comply strictly with the rules of humanitarian law. What is needed is a comprehensive assessment of the moral, strategic and physical security dimensions of those threats to the very core of the United Nations humanitarian mission.

#### *F. Peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building*

108. Maintaining and restoring international peace and security is a fundamental purpose of the United Nations. Although the vision embodied in the Charter of a collective security system has not yet been realized in practice, the Organization has evolved significant innovations over the years, such as the instrument of peacekeeping. Early post-cold-war euphoria exaggerated the range of possibilities for expanding the scope of United Nations peace operations, but the more recent sense of limits may err in the opposite direction.

109. An already difficult task has been rendered more difficult, it is true, by the fact that so many post-cold-war conflicts have taken the form of internal factional violence and civil strife that have significant external

repercussions. Important lessons have been learned from recent experience, however, as a result of which peacekeeping and its institutional support structures continue to be refined and adapted, while post-conflict peace-building has assumed an increasingly prominent role in the United Nations repertoire of means to achieve more lasting peace.

110. The international community has developed a clearer understanding both of the limits of peacekeeping and also of its continuing usefulness. As a result of past setbacks, Member States are more aware of the risks associated with dispatching operations with resources which do not match their mandates. We have also learned that inaction in the face of massive violence and threats to international peace and security is not an acceptable—or viable—option. Though peace is far less costly than war, there should be no illusion that it can be achieved on the cheap.

111. Currently, approximately 22,500 soldiers and civilian police serve in 16 missions in countries around the world. Those missions are managed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, of which Mr. Bernard Miyet became the Under-Secretary-General in February 1997. All help stabilize potentially volatile situations, and many involve extensive cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Only brief mention is made here or elsewhere in this report of major developments since the last reporting period.

112. In the Balkans, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its International Police Task Force work closely with the NATO Stabilization Force to convert into reality the undertakings made at Dayton, Ohio. The United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium achieved significant aims with the demilitarization of the local Serb forces, and in facilitating the elections held in April 1997. The United Nations Preventive Deployment Force is achieving its mandate in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka continues to monitor the situation in that area.

113. In Georgia, the United Nations Observer Mission cooperated with Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeeping forces to enable the parties to seek a political solution. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan supported the negotiation process that resulted in the general peace agreement signed in Moscow in June 1997. In Haiti, the United Nations is assisting in the rebuilding of that country's police force, and works with the Organization of American States in the field of human rights. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan continues to perform its functions. I am encouraged by recent moves towards a dialogue between the parties.

114. The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia is nearing the completion of its mandate, which it has pursued in conjunction with the Economic Community of West African States, to monitor a ceasefire and verify disarmament and demobilization. Those steps paved the way for the elections and installation of a new Government in the summer of 1997. Elsewhere in Africa, it has been possible to replace the United Nations Angola Verification Mission III with a smaller follow-on operation but, because the peace process in Angola appears to have reached an impasse, renewed efforts are necessary to consolidate national reconciliation and monitor human rights.

115. The Middle East remains one of the most critical points of tension in the world today. It is my hope that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will be revived and its forward momentum fully restored. The United Nations contributions to stability in the region include the humanitarian activities of UNRWA, discussed in the previous section; the development-related work of the Special Coordinator, dealt with below; and three peacekeeping missions: the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. With the cooperation of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, the efforts of UNDOF have been successful on the Golan Heights. In southern Lebanon, on the other hand, hostilities have continued between Israeli forces, with auxiliaries, and Lebanese groups. Elsewhere in the Middle East, the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission helps to ensure stability in the area of its deployment.

116. During the last year the Organization also planned and prepared for, but did not deploy, a mission to Sierra Leone; carried out significant contingency planning for possible missions in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo; and began, and successfully concluded, an observer mission in Guatemala.

117. In the context of the current effort by the international community to strengthen the United Nations, it is crucial to maintain and improve the Organization's ability to plan, manage and conduct peacekeeping missions.

The Secretariat is reviewing cumbersome or inappropriate rules and procedures that govern support for field operations, such as rules for recruitment, procurement and settlement of third-party liability claims. We are also exploring ways to ensure a unified effort in the entire United Nations system in all peacekeeping and peace-building activities, both in the field and at Headquarters. The creation within the Secretariat of an Executive Committee on Peace and Security is an important step towards that goal.

118. Other measures fall within the jurisdiction of Member States. Many of the structures and functions that are essential for peacekeeping activities lack stable funding, and many essential tasks are discharged by personnel made available temporarily to the United Nations by Member States. Indeed, half of all Professionals in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations fall into this category. The Organization needs a stable base of budget resources in the area of peacekeeping that reflects its real personnel requirements. Similarly, action on the proposal to create a rapidly deployable mission headquarters, around which the components of peacekeeping operations could be assembled, depends on the willingness of Member States to allocate the necessary financial resources.

119. Additional elements of a rapid deployment capacity are being explored. A number of States are developing military units that could deploy without undue delay upon a decision of the Security Council. A group of States consisting of Austria, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden signed a letter of intent in December 1996 to form a standby high readiness brigade within the framework of United Nations standby agreements. Some of those States have since moved further towards that objective. While we very much welcome these developments, the availability of troops will continue to depend on the willingness of their respective Governments to commit them in any given instance.

120. One key priority for the coming year is to draw on the experience gained in co-deployment in such cases as Georgia, Liberia and the former Yugoslavia to develop doctrine and guidelines so that the United Nations will be better prepared for such partnerships with regional organizations in the future. Ensuring that humanitarian strategies as well as longer-term development aims are fully integrated into the overall peacekeeping effort is another main priority in the year ahead. These are the challenges we must overcome as we seek to adapt the essential implement of United Nations peacekeeping to the crises we face today and will face tomorrow, and as we work to create a system of collective security for the twenty-first century.

121. The United Nations system as a whole is focusing as never before on peace-building—action to identify and support structures that will strengthen and solidify peace. Experience has shown that keeping peace in the sense of avoiding a relapse into armed conflict is a necessary but not sufficient condition for establishing the foundations of an enduring and just peace. Areas of additional activity may include military security, civil law and order, human rights, refugees and displaced persons, elections, local administration, involvement in public utilities, health, education, finance, customs and excise, reconstruction, and general attempts to return society to some sense of normality. No other institution in the world has the experience, competence, capacity for logistic support, coordinating ability and universality that the United Nations brings to these tasks.

122. A good example of peace-building at work is the case of Guatemala, where the United Nations contributed to bringing about the conclusion of the last remaining conflict in Central America with the signing, on 29 December 1996, of the final peace agreement. The United Nations, which had been verifying human rights in Guatemala since 1994, was entrusted by the General Assembly with the verification of the final agreements also. The ceasefire and demobilization of combatants was achieved within its 60-day deadline. In addition to promoting human rights, the accords seek to strengthen democratic institutions and the administration of justice, to improve the electoral system, to address social and economic inequities with a view to permitting wider participation of citizens at all levels, and to define the army's new role in society. The implementation of the accords calls for United Nations verification until the year 2000. This is a major challenge that will require full cooperation from the people of Guatemala, as well as the sustained support of the United Nations system and the international community.

123. Short of such comprehensive objectives, the United Nations has been involved, in Angola, Mali and Nicaragua, with demobilization and rehabilitation of former combatants. This task includes quartering ex-combatants, disarming, demobilizing and transporting them home, and facilitating their socio-economic reintegration. Elsewhere, including Rwanda, the United Nations has sought to provide technical assistance and training to strengthen the judiciary and support the communal police.

124. There is a growing appreciation of the fact that efforts in support of development cannot cease during emergencies, but must continue to be vigorously supported. The appropriate United Nations entities have

therefore devised development-oriented interventions to prevent relapses into crisis. Numerous projects were fielded during 1996-1997, involving UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and UNIFEM. I have taken steps to ensure that the United Nations system as a whole is able to meet the challenges of post-conflict peace-building in a unified and coherent manner, and to that end have designated the Department of Political Affairs as the United Nations focal point for post-conflict peace-building. Sir Kieran Prendergast joined us in March 1997 to head the Department.

125. The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) has a unique and strictly military peace-building mandate in verifying Iraq's full, final and complete disclosures on its prohibited weapons programmes. In the past year, the Security Council twice felt it necessary to condemn Iraq—once because the Commission's attempt to verify the destruction of missile engines was frustrated, and once because its movements were impeded and it was denied access to relevant sites. UNSCOM has identified significant continuing problems that will need to be addressed in the months ahead.

126. Also unique, but very different, is the Office of the Special Coordinator. It provides overall guidance to United Nations programmes and agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and works closely with the World Bank, in assisting the Palestinian Authority to achieve an integrated approach to development and a self-sustaining economy and to establish effective administrative institutions.

127. The cause of constructing a just peace also requires effective mechanisms of accountability for past wrongs. In many instances, national means are in place and suffice, though they may require international assistance, but some violations of fundamental human rights are so massive and some acts of violence so egregious that humanity as a whole is offended, and humanity as a whole must act. Significant steps have been taken along this road in recent years.

128. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia marked a major milestone in 1997 by delivering its first judgement and sentence. Moreover, its relationships with international forces and national authorities reached a turning point with the arrest and transfer to The Hague of three indicted persons. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda recovered lost ground that resulted from management and administrative deficiencies, and currently has three trials under way and 21 accused persons awaiting trial.

129. Lastly, the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court has almost completed its work on a consolidated text of a draft statute. I am firmly of the belief that the establishment of such a court would contribute profoundly to post-conflict peacebuilding, serve as a deterrent against future genocidal violence and mark a major step in the evolution of the rule of law at the international level. I endorse and support the creation of the court by an international conference that is scheduled to convene in 1998. Its birth at the end of a century that has been one of the bloodiest in history would bequeath a more robust realm of reason to the new.

### *G. The new transnational threats*

130. The same means of communication and personal mobility that make it possible for civil society actors to function globally also enable "uncivil society" actors to do so. In this world of increasingly porous borders new threats have emerged to national security, economic development, democracy and sovereignty in the form of transnational networks of crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism. By consolidating the several relevant functions into one single Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, based in Vienna, and by appointing Mr. Pino Arlacchi, an expert on organized crime, to lead it, I have sought to reposition the United Nations to help contain this growing threat.

131. The United Nations and the specialized agencies have long played a central role in the struggle to suppress international terrorism. Twelve multilateral treaties, as well as the declarations concerning measures to eliminate international terrorism, have been adopted for dealing with specific acts of terrorism. The General Assembly reviewed the legal instruments to identify gaps in the existing regime, and in 1996 established an Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate new international conventions for the suppression of terrorist bombings and the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The Committee also plans to develop a comprehensive legal framework for dealing with international terrorism.

132. Organized criminal groups are spreading their operations around the globe. Developing countries and emerging democracies are prime targets owing to the vulnerabilities of their weak institutions. To help redress this problem, Member States adopted the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized

Transnational Crime in 1994, asking Governments to harmonize legislation and ensure that their justice systems were provided with the means to prevent and control organized transnational crime.

133. Under the auspices of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, a variety of practical actions and legal protocols followed from the Naples document in support of its objectives, including the establishment of databases, together with agreements on monitoring and information exchange. At its sixth session, in the spring of 1997, the Commission reviewed a draft convention to combat organized transnational crime, and took action on several specific manifestations of it, such as bribery and corruption, the smuggling of illegal migrants and the illicit traffic in children.

134. During the past year, the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division of the Secretariat provided assistance to the Economic Community of West African States in developing and implementing a regional convention on mutual assistance in criminal matters, and initiated a regional framework for cooperation in the area of extradition. The Division also helped the Government of South Africa to devise a witness protection programme; the Government of Kyrgyzstan to establish a specialized department within the Ministry of the Interior to fight organized crime; and the Government of Romania to strengthen the capacity of the criminal justice system to prevent and fight corruption and organized crime. Needs assessment exercises were undertaken in Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Bolivia, Georgia, Guinea, Pakistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Togo.

135. To counter drug trafficking and abuse, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) promotes adherence to and implementation of international drug control treaties, particularly the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which is the main framework for international cooperation. In 1996, the Programme assisted 15 Governments in drafting and implementing national drug control laws and regulations, including training for law enforcement personnel, national administrators, judges, magistrates and prosecutors.

136. In cooperation with the International Narcotics Control Board, the Programme also assisted Governments in efforts to prevent the diversion of drugs and their precursors into the illicit market. Regional assistance programmes to that end were undertaken in central, south and south-west Asia. The Programme also published a comprehensive global study and examined countermeasures intended to address the new threat posed by the illicit manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of a variety of stimulants, particularly amphetamines.

137. To assist Governments in combating illicit drug trafficking, UNDCP regional law enforcement advisers in eastern and southern Africa, Latin America and south-east Asia provided advisory services and technical assistance. In all, 16 law enforcement programmes were begun in the past year, with support emphasizing training for police and customs officials so as to augment their capacity to interdict and seize narcotic drugs. UNDCP also sponsored cross-border cooperation among drug law enforcement agencies, including in the border zones between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and between India and Pakistan. Frameworks for cooperation and mutual assistance are also provided by regional plans of action, such as those in Africa and the Caribbean.

138. Cooperation with other organizations has a multiplier effect in the fight against drugs. UNDCP signed a memorandum of understanding with the World Customs Organization, establishing the basic principles of cooperation between the two organizations. They worked together in the implementation of a network of regional intelligence liaison offices, and 15 eastern and southern African States received support enabling them to detect new drug trafficking trends. Closer cooperation has also been established between UNDCP and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol).

139. During the 1990s traffickers increasingly used commercial vessels as a major means of transporting illicit drugs in bulk quantity from source countries to markets. Consequently, UNDCP has initiated programmes to strengthen the capacities of Governments to counter illicit trafficking by sea and through seaports.

140. Efforts to reduce the demand for illicit drugs are an indispensable component of strategies to combat drug trafficking. However, many Governments lack the resources, knowledge and skills to develop and implement sustainable programmes of drug abuse prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. The support provided by UNDCP focuses on mobilizing civil society, particularly nongovernmental organizations and the business community, the latter through workplace drug prevention programmes.

141. UNDCP also supports alternative development programmes aimed at breaking the hold that drug traffickers establish on regions affected by the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants, particularly the coca bush and

the opium poppy. In 1996, the Programme initiated a four-year, \$15.9 million, technical cooperation programme in Afghanistan and a five-year alternative development programme in the Wa region of Myanmar.

142. To deprive drug traffickers of the economic power and influence derived from the proceeds of their illicit activities, UNDCP assists Governments in efforts to counter money-laundering and confiscate assets gained from drug trafficking. The Programme is financing and supporting a \$4.3 million global programme aimed at improving the capacity of the relevant legal and related law enforcement systems, which includes the creation of financial intelligence units to reduce the vulnerability of financial systems. Implementation of the programme will be undertaken in close cooperation with other organizations and entities affected by the money-laundering phenomenon. The fight remains a daunting challenge, however, as free trade and high-speed telecommunications, together with substantial resources, provide opportunities for criminals to diversify their operations, reduce risks and maximize profitability.

#### *H. Legal affairs, management and communications*

143. Without legal norms and instruments that are universally relevant and respected, without a clear sense of mission and high standards of performance, and without effective communications about United Nations aims and activities, the Organization's efforts would stand little chance of satisfying the needs and aspirations of countries and peoples alike. In each of these areas, the past year has seen significant gains: advancing the cause of international law in several important respects, elevating the quality of our management systems and sharpening our message about the Organization's activities. These steps are putting in place the enabling and supportive infrastructure that will help United Nations operational activities achieve their desired results.

144. The Office of Legal Affairs contributes substantively in its own right to the aims of the United Nations, and it also serves, in a supportive capacity, all other parts of the Organization.

145. Substantively, through its Codification Division the Office is deeply involved in the effort to establish an international criminal court and in the elaboration of new legal instruments to combat terrorism, referred to in the preceding sections. The International Trade Law Branch of the Office continued to assist the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in removing obstacles to international trade through the progressive harmonization and unification of international trade laws. At its 1997 session, for example, the Commission adopted a model law on cross-border insolvency to promote legislation in cases where the insolvent debtor has assets in more than one State. Efforts are also under way in such novel areas as digital signatures. On the basis of a draft produced by the International Law Commission, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses in May 1997.

146. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention has led the United Nations to redesign its programme of information, advice and assistance in this field. The Office of Legal Affairs assists the various institutions created by the Convention, including the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, which was established and held its first meeting in June 1997; the International Seabed Authority, which completed its initial organizational work and has begun to function; and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which is expected to do likewise in 1998.

147. In its supportive capacity, the work of the Office of Legal Affairs encompassed research and opinions on private and public international law; advice and services related to peacekeeping operations; and guidance to numerous subsidiary organs. The Office also helped to coordinate the legal services of the specialized agencies and other United Nations entities.

148. The Office participated in one of the main aspects of the reform process, the drafting and elaboration of a new Code of Conduct for United Nations staff, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration. The Code sets out the core values inherent in the concept of the international civil servant, as well as the basic rights and obligations pertaining thereto. The new provisions are also intended to ensure that officials are accountable for their performance.

149. One of the Office's primary obligations under the Charter is to register and publish international treaties concluded by Member States. The Office continued its drive to eliminate the backlog in the Treaty Section, a task it expects to complete in the next few years. At the same time, important steps have been taken to make the United Nations treaty collection available via electronic media, so that a wider audience—not only diplomats and international lawyers but also non-governmental organizations, private sector enterprises, members of the academic community and others around the world—can gain access to this valuable resource.

150. The Department of Administration and Management has accelerated the implementation of the Organization's management plan, which seeks improvements in five key, interrelated areas: human resources, the overall work programme, information, technology and cost structure. The Organization's financial situation was also a major preoccupation, and the various reform and restructuring initiatives announced throughout the year brought added impetus to these efforts.

151. To improve the management of human resources, the Department continued to build up in-house capacity for organizational development, staff development and planning. Action-oriented seminars were held. Staff development initiatives focused on upgrading skills, enhancing accountability and delegating authority. The Secretariat's efforts have been impaired, however, by the exceedingly complex rules and regulations governing human resources and financial operations. Increasingly intrusive scrutiny by intergovernmental bodies, coupled with additional layers of oversight mechanisms, exacerbated this situation still further.

152. The management of the United Nations work programme benefited from good progress in revising the format of the medium-term plan, which is the Organization's principal policy directive and provides the framework for the preparation of its biennial budgets. Still, as in the past, Member States encountered great difficulties in agreeing on strategic imperatives.

153. Effective management is heavily dependent on the availability of information. The Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) has now been deployed to five duty stations. As the "home" for all of the Organization's administrative processes—personnel, finance, procurement—IMIS is fast becoming the administrative backbone of our worldwide operations. Several other entities and specialized agencies have adopted, or are considering adopting, IMIS, suggesting that the time is not far off when managers throughout the United Nations system will adhere to a common, unifying and efficient standard.

154. The need for electronic support services has increased dramatically, requiring an expanding and more complex technological infrastructure. Such applications, in addition to IMIS, include the Internet and Intranet and emerging technologies such as video-conferencing and remote translation. A strategic plan for technology has been devised and put in place, and great strides have been made in updating existing infrastructure. Future funding levels must, however, ensure that the Organization is capable not only of avoiding technical malfunctions and obsolescence but also of investing in its technological development.

155. With respect to the cost structure, the Organization has managed to stay within increasingly tight budgets while delivering the outputs mandated by Member States. Even after cuts of \$250 million—nearly 10 per cent of the previous budgetary base—it was possible to propose a negative growth budget for the biennium 1998-1999. The efficiency programme has been instrumental in identifying cost savings and in mitigating the impact of mandated reductions. The first round focused on projects proposed by staff and managers. Phase two, which is well under way, is addressing more fundamental issues: simplifying processes, delegating authority, and giving more responsibilities and flexibility to programme managers.

156. The Department of Management, as its new name indicates, is now poised to shift to a more proactive management culture, moving away from purely administrative control systems, and from piecemeal management improvements, to fundamental reform of the management practices of the Organization. Under this new approach, substantive units will have greater administrative flexibility, leaving the central management to concentrate on policy development, support services and compliance monitoring. Perhaps most significantly, less of the Organization's resources will be used for non-programme purposes, freeing resources for substantive efforts. At a time of constraints on resources for development, this is good news for our clients—the countries and peoples of the world that need United Nations economic and social programmes.

157. I wish to draw to the attention of Member States a different and very serious matter regarding United Nations personnel: the growing threats to their security. Events over the past year have exposed United Nations staff members to an exponential increase in risks and deliberate violence. Since September 1996, 21 civilian staff members have lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

158. Hostage-taking constitutes a new threat to United Nations personnel. Since 1 September 1996, 47 staff members have been held hostage for varying periods of time. Of equal concern is the fact that staff members continue to be detained or are missing. These statistics do not include staff members who were attacked, harassed, injured, beaten or raped. Nor do the numbers measure the loss, trauma and emotional stress suffered by the families. Adequate funds must be found for the necessary measures to ensure the security and safety of United Nations personnel.



159. The power of information, clearly recognized by the founders of the United Nations, has been elevated to a higher plane in recent years with rapid advances in information and communications technology. High-tech or not, information is a dynamic force for education and cross-cultural understanding and for promoting freedom, democratization and broader participation by people in the decisions affecting their lives. Its great potential must be harnessed by, and for, the United Nations.

160. Early on, I identified the reorientation of the United Nations public information activities as one of the more urgent requirements of the reform process. A task force of prominent communications experts was convened to examine all aspects of the mandates, arrangements and operations of the Department of Public Information. In its report, "Global vision, local voice", the task force made far-reaching proposals and recommendations to fundamentally revamp the Organization's communications strategy and practices. I have acted on those recommendations, and implementation measures are under way.

161. In the meantime, the Department continued to adapt itself to the new communications environment. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the Internet. The United Nations Web site now registers 700,000 to 800,000 "hits" per week, and the range of available material is being expanded. In October 1996, the Department launched the CyberSchoolBus, an interactive on-line educational programme that is averaging more than 250,000 hits per week and exemplifies our efforts to focus on youth and to collaborate with teachers, educational institutions and teachers' associations. The Dag Hammarskjold Library home page has been expanded also, another step in our efforts to turn it into a "library without walls"—and similar steps have been taken at Geneva.

162. The Department's embrace of the Internet has resulted in a variety of quantifiable dividends. Posting the catalogue of United Nations publications has led to an increase in sales. Print runs have been reduced, saving paper and cutting down on physical distribution requirements. Press releases issued by the Department, the only immediately written accounts of the proceedings of intergovernmental meetings held at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, are posted instantly on the Internet, reaching a vast new audience and allowing for a 25 per cent decrease in print runs. Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, all of which are now on-line, have also realized savings in terms of telecommunications costs since many no longer have to send important documents by mail or fax to their Foreign Offices.

163. At the same time, the Department recognizes that information technology is not yet universally available, and has therefore continued to use traditional media—press, radio and television. United Nations radio, for example, is moving towards an international broadcasting capacity, as provided for in the medium-term plan. The Department has also strengthened its partnerships with key television executives through the United Nations World Television Forum.

164. United Nations peacekeeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian actions present special communications challenges. Several "concentric" audiences must be reached if United Nations efforts are to be sustained: the population in areas immediately affected; the international media; and a broad, global audience whose support is essential. The past year has seen intensified consultation with the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations, and standard guidelines and a manual for information components in the field are being finalized. Since timely information is particularly important with respect to field operations, the Department of Public Information has shifted its emphasis from print to electronic dissemination.

165. Substantive priorities during the past year included the General Assembly's mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of Agenda 21—"Rio +5"—and planning for the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the special session of the General Assembly on drugs.

166. The network of United Nations information centres and services plays a pivotal role in all of these activities, galvanizing local nongovernmental organizations and other United Nations partners in support of United Nations themes and issues. The integration of United Nations information centres with field offices will continue, as approved by the General Assembly, on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the host country. In industrialized countries, the information centres will continue to strengthen their collaboration with other members of the United Nations system and with national groups, with a thrust towards mobilizing national resources in support of the United Nations.

*The steps ahead*

167. This is my first opportunity to report to Member States on the work of the Organization. Although I have served the United Nations for more than 30 years, never before has it been my responsibility to form a considered judgement about its overall functioning and efficacy. Having done so now I find that, all in all, I am prudently optimistic.

168. As documented in the preceding pages, the United Nations has taken considerable strides in recent years to adapt to the far-reaching changes in its external environment. No sector of its activities has remained unaffected. Indeed, within the framework of principles and missions enunciated by the Charter, entirely new programme areas and work modalities have been initiated and others redefined as the needs of the international community have evolved. Moreover, despite the numerous constraints under which they operate, and notwithstanding occasional exceptions, the inventiveness of the Organization's senior managers is commendable and the dedication of its staff a source of pride.

169. Much yet needs to be done, however. In chapter II of this report, I indicated some of the desirable and necessary steps ahead in the various substantive programme areas and support structures. Here I wish to draw attention to critical overarching issues that affect the future performance of the Organization.

170. The fiscal precariousness of the United Nations is unprecedented and debilitating. For too many years we have been forced to "borrow" from the peacekeeping account to cover regular budget shortfalls caused by non-payment of dues by some Members. That is to say, we have not reimbursed Member States for the cost of troops they provided and materiel they supplied in good faith and pursuant to Security Council resolutions. Now that source, too, is nearing depletion. I hope and trust that we shall soon be able to put this problem behind us, and that in the future all Member States will fulfil their legal obligations to the Organization—and one another—by paying their dues in full and on time.

171. Apart from the fiscal problems caused by arrears, as I noted in the opening section of this report, long-term shifts at the national and international levels alike imply that fundamental change is in store for the workings of intergovernmental organizations. The resources available to such organizations, including the United Nations, are declining relative to the magnitude of the tasks they face and to the capacities of other actors, especially the private sector. What is more, the very concept of intergovernmentalism as we know it is being altered as a result of the redefinition of the role of government and the means of governance now under way throughout the world.

172. In this transformed context, the Organization's past pattern of incremental adaptations will not suffice. To succeed in the new century, the United Nations must unleash its own major resource: the complementarities and synergies that exist within it. In other words, the United Nations must undergo fundamental, not piecemeal, reform. Three related steps are imperative. Each requires the support of Member States.

173. The first is to create the appropriate Secretariat structures that will permit the Organization to act as one within and across its diverse areas of activities. Acting as one does not mean moving in lock step. Nor does it imply denying the specific attributes of any component part. It does require that the Organization be capable of deploying its constituent units strategically while avoiding overlap and duplication, let alone competition, among them. Many of my proposals for reform are designed to achieve this aim: the position of Deputy Secretary-General, the Senior Management Group, the Strategic Planning Unit, four sectoral Executive Committees, and the United Nations Development Group, to cite the most important of them.

174. The second essential step is to reconfigure the balance of functions between the Organization's legislative bodies and the Secretary-General. Largely for reasons relating to the cold-war practice of bloc politics, a large number of the rigidities with which the Organization is afflicted are, in fact, mandated. Member States demand and deserve accountability, but the Secretariat also needs flexibility to get its job done in the most cost-effective manner. The current situation serves neither party well. Several of my reform proposals seek to redress this problem, including recommendations on streamlining the agenda and the deliberations of the General Assembly, instituting sunset provisions for new mandates, and, most importantly, moving towards a results-based system of budgeting.

175. Finally, even where the best of systems are in place, people matter. The United Nations staff is a precious resource, which in some measure has been squandered by rules and regulations that impede rather than serve the effective performance of its work. The Organization needs a functioning career development programme, meaningful criteria and evaluations of performance coupled with real incentive and disincentive

systems, as well as a corporate culture that animates and unifies those who serve it. I look forward to joining Member States in devising personnel policies that will help bring these conditions about.

176. As we approach the new century, the international community has some way to go to realize the hopes and commitments of the Charter of the United Nations but, when we measure our progress against the state of the world a century ago, we can only be impressed by how far we have come. Indeed, one of the most significant differences between that *fin de siècle* and this is precisely the fact that international organizations now exist to remind, and enable, the world to do better. That is why it is our solemn and historic obligation to make the United Nations the most effective instrument possible for the achievement of peace and progress—for our children, and for theirs.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter I (pp. 31–64)**

**International peace and security**

AGENDA FOR PEACE, 31. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, 40: General aspects, 40; Comprehensive review of peacekeeping, 42; Operations in 1997, 44; Roster of 1997 operations, 46; Financial and administrative aspects of peacekeeping operations, 48. OTHER PEACEKEEPING MATTERS, 62: Demining, 62; Cooperation with regional organizations, 63; Dag Hammarskjold Medal, 63; Fiftieth anniversary of peacekeeping, 64.

The United Nations continued in 1997 to pursue the Charter objective of maintaining international peace and security, principally through its peacekeeping operations. The year was marked by a noticeable decrease in the establishment of totally new missions, in the number of personnel involved and in their average size, either through streamlining or as a response to changes in the political environment. Accompanying the Organization's peacekeeping activities were efforts for the prevention and early resolution of conflicts, as a means of reducing the need for new and costly peacekeeping operations, and for post-conflict peace-building to prevent the recurrence of conflicts. In September, the General Assembly adopted texts on the questions of coordination and sanctions imposed by the United Nations as proposed by the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace.

The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in 1997 made recommendations on: enhancing UN peacekeeping capacity; the organization, planning and coordination of peacekeeping operations; safety and security; training; rapid deployment and standby arrangements; and cooperation with regional arrangements. The Assembly endorsed those recommendations in June, September, October and December.

Over the course of the year, 20 UN peacekeeping operations were deployed, with some 22,500 soldiers and civilian police serving under UN command around the world by mid-year. By year's end, that number was reduced to 15, two of them new follow-on missions—one in Haiti and the other in Angola. Another five UN missions—one each in Angola, Guatemala and Liberia and two in Haiti—completed their mandates during the year. The Security Council also authorized the establishment by Member States of two missions—a multinational protection force for Albania and an inter-African monitoring mission for the Central African Republic.

In addition to its peacekeeping operations, the United Nations employed a variety of other means to address conflict situations, including the deployment of special representatives, special envoys and other emissaries in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and Somalia. It also provided assistance for mine clearing, the conduct of elections, and monitoring and protecting human rights.

The cost of UN peacekeeping operations during the year was estimated at \$875.6 million, compared with \$1.4 billion in 1996, while unpaid assessed contributions from Member States to peacekeeping budgets amounted to \$2.1 billion as at 30 June 1997.

The General Assembly in 1997 considered various aspects of peacekeeping financing, including reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment, the peacekeeping reserve fund, voluntary contributions, and the financing of the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi, Italy. It adopted a system of self-insurance

and established standardized rates for the payment of death and disability benefits. The Assembly also endorsed a proposal to establish a field assets control system.

In July, the Security Council encouraged States to make available to the United Nations at short notice trained civilian police, through UN standby arrangements.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter II (pp. 65–165)**

**Africa**

CONFLICT PREVENTION, 66. GREAT LAKES REGION, 68: Political situation, 68; Refugee situation, 71. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (ZAIRE), 71: Background, 71; Developments in 1997, 73. RWANDA, 80: Humanitarian situation, 81; Human rights situation, 81; Arms embargo, 82; UNAMIR financing, 82. BURUNDI, 83: Political situation, 83; Burundi-United Republic of Tanzania, 89; Burundi-Zaire, 90; Human rights situation, 90. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, 91: Bangui Agreements, 91. ANGOLA, 98: Implementation of Lusaka Protocol, 99; Other matters, 110. REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, 112: Political and security developments, 113. LIBERIA, 118: UN operation in Liberia, 118; Other matters, 128. SIERRA LEONE, 129. SOMALIA, 140. WESTERN SAHARA, 145: Implementation of settlement plan, 146; UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, 153. LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA, 155: Sanctions regime, 155. SUDAN, 161: Sudan-Eritrea, 161; Sudan-Ethiopia, 161; Sudan-Uganda, 162. OTHER QUESTIONS, 162: Mozambique, 162; Mayotte, 162; Cooperation between OAU and the UN system, 162.

During 1997, the continent of Africa continued to experience political instability and human suffering, despite some encouraging developments. Ethnic conflict affected many African nations, particularly those in the Great Lakes region. Throughout the year, the United Nations, mainly through the Security Council, attempted to address comprehensively the challenges facing all the nations of Africa by seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts within and between African States. The Organization collaborated frequently with regional and subregional bodies in efforts to resolve situations in such countries as Liberia, Sierra Leone and the former Zaire (the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and continued to assist the Angolan parties in consolidating peace and national reconciliation. On 25 September, the Council held its first ministerial meeting on Africa to assess the situation on the continent and to re-evaluate the role of the international community in support of Africa's goals. It requested the Secretary-General to submit in 1998 a report on the sources of conflict in Africa and ways to prevent and address those conflicts.

The overthrow of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in May and the massive exodus of refugees from that country, as well as from the United Republic of Tanzania, to Burundi and Rwanda created an unstable social, humanitarian and economic environment throughout the Great Lakes region. Rwanda witnessed an escalation of violence and fighting in certain parts of the country while Burundi's security situation remained unstable. The Council welcomed the decision by regional leaders to ease some of the sanctions imposed against Burundi since the July 1996 coup d'etat there. It also approved the appointments of a joint United Nations/Organization of African Unity Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and of the Secretary-General's Representative and Regional Humanitarian Adviser for the region.

In the Central African Republic, concerted regional initiatives, supported by the United Nations, led to the signing of a peace agreement in January and to the deployment of an African peace-monitoring force—the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB). The Security Council approved the MISAB mandate and authorized the intervention. Those peace efforts brought about a gradual improvement in the military and security situation in the country.

In Angola, despite the formation of a Government of national unity, military and political tensions continued to undermine the implementation of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol signed between the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The Council imposed sanctions against UNITA, and a gradual withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops commenced.

Although the Republic of the Congo experienced factional conflict in 1997, causing UN agencies to evacuate their staff from Brazzaville, the capital, the situation had improved sufficiently by October for humanitarian staff to return to work.

In Liberia, the United Nations contributed to the fulfilment of the 1995 Abuja Agreement by bringing to completion, in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the disarmament and demobilization of the Liberian factions. National elections and the establishment of a new Government followed.

The democratically elected Government of Sierra Leone was overthrown by a coup d'etat in May, and thousands of Sierra Leoneans fled to neighbouring countries, especially Guinea and Liberia. The Council, concerned with the security situation in the region, imposed sanctions against the military regime, which signed a peace agreement. However, little progress was made in its implementation by the end of the year.

Ethnic conflict continued to undermine political and security stability in Somalia, despite renewed efforts at the regional and international levels to bring about an end to years of fighting. In December, all major Somali leaders signed a declaration calling for, among other things, the establishment of a constitutional federal Government with regional autonomy and the holding of a national reconciliation conference in 1998.

In Western Sahara, the United Nations renewed its efforts towards the holding of a referendum on the self-determination of the Territory. Some progress was achieved in November when Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (POLISARIO) held direct talks and agreed on a 66 Political and security questions number of issues pertaining to the modalities of the referendum. The ceasefire continued to hold throughout the year.

The United Nations continued its efforts towards achieving sustainable peace and growth in a number of countries through the work of Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and peacekeeping and observer missions. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) continued throughout 1997. The mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission III (UNAVEM III) expired in June and a new operation—the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola/Missão de Observação das Nações Unidas em Angola (MONUA)—was established in July. The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), established in 1993, came to an end in September, and was replaced in November by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Liberia (UNOL). The United Nations was represented in Rwanda by the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (HRFOR) and the Joint Reintegration Programming Unit, established in March by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) continued to operate in Nairobi, Kenya.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan

Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 continued its work (see PART FOUR, Chapter II). A United Nations investigation was launched in July to examine alleged human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1 March 1993.

The sanctions imposed against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 1992 in order to obtain Libya's cooperation in the release of two individuals suspected of involvement in a 1988 aircraft bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, were upheld by the Council in 1997. The Council also expressed concern over repeated violations of the air flight restriction terms on the part of Libyan authorities. A French investigative team was allowed to visit Libya and to conduct an inquiry pertaining to a 1989 aircraft crash in the Niger.



**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter III (pp. 166–200)**

**Americas**

CENTRAL AMERICA, 166: Guatemala, 169; El Salvador, 184. HAITI, 186: UN Mission in Haiti, 186; UN Support Mission in Haiti, 187; UN Transition Mission in Haiti, 190; Civilian Police Mission, 193; International Civilian Mission to Haiti, 194. OTHER QUESTIONS, 197: Andean Community, 197; Cuba-United States, 198; Panama Canal, 199; Peru-Ecuador, 200.

In 1997, the United Nations continued to address situations of political, social and economic crisis in Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean.

Throughout Central America, there were efforts to enhance the goals of peace, democratization, reconciliation, development and justice; stability in democratically elected Governments, even in the face of internal difficulties; and the strengthening of democratic institutions and continued efforts to bring military and public security bodies under the control of civilian authorities.

In Guatemala, the United Nations undertook the new verification tasks entrusted to it in the peace accords signed in 1996 between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) had been mandated to verify human rights in accordance with a number of previously adopted human rights agreements.

In Haiti, the United Nations continued its cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS) through the jointly fielded International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH), established in 1993 to verify the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, provide institution-building, and support the development of a programme for the promotion and protection of human rights. In July, the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) was succeeded by the United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti (UNTMIH)—with a mandate limited to a single four-month period ending on 30 November 1997—to continue to provide assistance to Haiti in the professionalization of the Haitian National Police (HNP). Subsequently, UNTMIH was replaced by the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), with a one-year mandate ending on 30 November 1998 to continue to assist HNP.

In 1997, the General Assembly continued consideration of the United States economic embargo against Cuba. It concluded consideration of the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, held in September in Panama City. In October, the Assembly approved observer status for the Andean Community.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter IV (pp. 201–286)**

**Asia and the Pacific**

IRAQ, 201: UN Special Commission, 202; Limitations on UNSCOM activities, 208; IAEA activities, 222; Arms and related sanctions, 227; Oil-for-food programme, 230; UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, 246; Other matters, 249. AFGHANISTAN, 252. TAJIKISTAN, 263. KOREAN QUESTION, 278. CAMBODIA, 281. OTHER MATTERS, 284.

In 1997, the United Nations remained engaged in meeting the challenges to regional security and peace in Asia and the Pacific, mainly in Iraq, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Korean peninsula and Cambodia.

The United Nations Special Commission for the disarmament of Iraq and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continued to conduct the weapons inspections mandated by Security Council resolution 687(1991) embodying the terms of a formal ceasefire of the 1991 Gulf War, which Iraq accepted. As efforts to bring their mandate to a final conclusion had been confronted by Iraq's increasingly toughening stance towards those inspections, which included the expulsion of United States inspectors from the country, the two bodies were unable to report to the Council that Iraq was finally in full compliance with its long-standing obligations under the weapons-related provisions of the resolution. Hence, the sanctions regime against Iraq remained in place. The United Nations continued to alleviate the unintended consequences of the sanctions on the Iraqi population through the humanitarian programme based on an oil-for-food formula authorized by the Council in 1995, which the Council extended to the end of May 1998.

A peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in Afghanistan continued to elude the unremitting efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan to bring to the negotiating table the country's two main rivals for political legitimacy: the Taliban and the opposition coalition commonly referred to as the Northern Alliance. The Security Council and the General Assembly called on all Afghan parties to put an immediate end to the fighting and for a cessation of all external interference in Afghan affairs. In addition, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to pursue the study of a fair and verifiable arms embargo on Afghanistan and supported his call for an international framework to address the external aspects of the Afghan question.

The mediating efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Tajikistan bore fruit with the conclusion in June of a General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord between the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, breaking the long impasse that had existed between them on political issues. If implemented, the General Agreement would lead to elections and the formation of a new Government. In support of that implementation, the Council expanded the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers to include additional functions during the transition period and extended it to May 1998.

In Cambodia, where the United Nations had invested considerable resources to help bring about a democratically elected Government in 1993, the United Nations once more was requested, and it indicated its readiness, to play a monitoring role that should contribute towards restoring the functioning of the country's

civil institutions by their duly elected officials following its disruption in July by armed violence between the two parties that had formed the coalition Government.

On the Korean peninsula, the United Nations Command continued to monitor the 1953 Armistice Agreement, while IAEA continued to seek full compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its obligations under its nuclear safeguards agreement with the Agency.

Other political matters within the region continued to be drawn to the attention of the United Nations. They concerned Iran, with respect to its relations with Iraq and the United States; the United Arab Emirates and Iran, regarding the disputed islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa; and India and Pakistan, on the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter V (pp. 287–382)**

**Europe and the Mediterranean**

THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, 288: State succession issues, 290. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, 291: Implementation of Peace Agreement, 291; Military aspects of Agreement, 312. CROATIA, 313: UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), 314; UN Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP), 335; Human rights concerns, 339; Occupied territories, 341. THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM), 341: UN Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), 341. ALBANIA, 348. GEORGIA, 354: UN Observer Mission in Georgia, 354. ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN, 367. CYPRUS, 368: Good offices mission, 370; UNFICYP, 371. OTHER ISSUES, 377: Relations among Balkan States, 377; Cooperation with OSCE, 378; Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, 381.

The resolution of the complex situation in the territories of the former Yugoslavia-Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (FRY) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)—continued to be the major focus of United Nations attention in the region of Europe and the Mediterranean. However, the situation in Albania and Georgia, including the region of Abkhazia, and the conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorny Karabakh region and in the Mediterranean island of Cyprus were of no less concern as United Nations efforts to find solutions to those continuing conflicts intensified.

In the countries of the former Yugoslavia, United Nations peacekeeping efforts in 1997 achieved mixed results in the restoration of peace and stability. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) continued to assist the parties in implementing the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes (also known as the Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement or the Peace Agreement) and the separate Dayton Agreement on implementing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two major implementation bodies of the Agreement met during the year—the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in Sintra, Portugal, in May, and the PIC Conference in Bonn, Germany, in December. The Council noted that, despite some progress, peace and the institutions of civil society to uphold it remained fragile. In March and again in May, the Security Council authorized an increase in UNMIBH police personnel. In December, the Council extended UNMIBH's mandate for a further six months, until June 1998.

The United Nations achieved significant success in its efforts towards the full implementation of the 12 November 1995 Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. In July, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) for a final period until 15 January 1998, following the successful holding of elections and the implementation by Croatia of its commitments with respect to the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council created a new police monitoring mission to replace UNTAES on the termination of its mandate. However, no progress was made in settling the conflict in the Prevlaka peninsula, where the United Nations Mission of Observers (UNMOP) continued to monitor its demilitarization.

In FYROM, reduction of the military component of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) began in March but was suspended until May in view of the situation in neighbouring Albania and its possible effects on Albanian-speaking minorities throughout the region. The reductions resumed on 1 October as the situation improved. In December, the Council decided to extend UNPREDEP's mandate for a final period until August 1998 and to complete withdrawal of the military component soon thereafter. It requested the Secretary-General to submit recommendations on the most appropriate type of international presence in the country after that date.

With regard to the situation in Albania, the Council, in March, authorized the deployment of a multinational force (known as Operation Alba), led by Italy, for three months to help restore and uphold the rule of law and the integrity of Albania's institutions and to deal with the humanitarian crisis that had resulted from the chaos and unrest caused by failed investment schemes. The force, which was extended in June for another 45 days, was withdrawn in early August as the situation returned to normal.

The Georgian peace process was revitalized during the year as the Secretary-General convened talks on the conflict in July and November at which all sides agreed to the strengthening of United Nations involvement in the peace process and approved a programme of action and a mechanism for doing so, including a coordinating council. However, in November, the Council expressed regret that despite those efforts there had been no visible progress on the future political status of Abkhazia and the return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for a further six months, until 31 January 1998.

The Secretary-General intensified his efforts to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. He convened talks in July in the 288 Political and security questions New York area and in Switzerland in August between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities to consider principles and objectives of a settlement and modalities of future negotiations. Although those talks were inconclusive, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser continued to consult with the two leaders on the modalities of their continuation.

The United Nations continued to cooperate with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in its efforts to achieve a settlement of the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorny Karabakh region. No progress was made during the year towards that end.

In other areas, the General Assembly stressed that closer engagement of Balkan States in cooperation agreements would favourably influence the political and economic situation in the region, as well as good-neighbourly relations among all Balkan States. It also adopted resolutions on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE and on strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter VI (pp. 383–471)**

**Middle East**

PEACE PROCESS, 384: Overall situation, 384; Occupied territories, 384. ISSUES RELATED TO PALESTINE, 427: General aspects, 427; Assistance to Palestinians, 437; The UN and Palestinian refugees, 440. PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, 456: Lebanon, 456; Syrian Arab Republic, 465.

The Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, Spain, in 1991, stagnated in 1997, despite efforts to get it back on track. The Protocol concerning the redeployment of the Israeli Defence Forces in Hebron, concluded in January, and other Israeli measures, including the release of all female Palestinian prisoners, inspired hope for a revival of the peace talks. However, Israel's decision to start construction of a new settlement in Jebel Abu Ghneim south of East Jerusalem in March—the first since Israel had announced in August 1996 that it would cancel the restrictions on the building of settlements imposed in 1992 by the previous Government—thwarted that positive trend and led to a dangerous and lengthy stalemate. Terrorist bombings in Israel, which took the lives of innocent people, further shook the confidence between Israelis and Palestinians and deepened the crisis. The Israel-Syrian Arab Republic and Israel-Lebanon tracks of negotiations were also stalled.

In view of Israel's renewed settlement activities, the Security Council met twice in March, but failed to adopt the two draft resolutions before it, which would have requested Israel to stop construction of the Jebel Abu Ghneim settlement, as well as other similar activities. In the absence of action by the Council, the General Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950 entitled "Uniting for Peace" [YUN 1950, p. 193], convened in April for its tenth emergency special session, which was resumed in July and again in November. The Assembly demanded, among other things, immediate cessation of all settlement activities and other illegal Israeli measures in Jerusalem, and recommended that the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) hold a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory. A number of the 188 States parties to the Convention voiced support for the recommendation.

The UN system's economic and social assistance to the Palestinians, coordinated by the UN Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, was geared towards improving living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—which had deteriorated due to frequent closures of the occupied territories, in order to help create a favourable atmosphere for the peace process on the ground. Chinmaya R. Gharekhan—serving also as the Secretary-General's Representative to the multilateral peace talks—succeeded Terje Rød-Larsen as Special Coordinator in February.

In 1997, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continued to mobilize international support for the Palestinians. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories reported to the General Assembly on the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

Despite ongoing serious financial problems, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) maintained a wide-ranging programme of education, health, relief and social services to more than 3.4 million Palestinian refugees living both in and outside camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Agency's financial crisis forced the UNRWA Commissioner-General to announce further austerity measures in August, including, for the first time, the introduction of school fees and a freeze on reimbursement of hospitalization costs, which provoked protests by the refugee community. Donor pledges of additional allocations enabled the Commissioner-General to revoke those measures for the time being. In view of the dire financial circumstances—which were likely to continue—donors were urged to increase their contributions to the Agency so that it could maintain the most basic and effective assistance to the refugees.

The situation in southern Lebanon remained tense and volatile during 1997, with a rising level of hostilities and an increase in the number of civilian casualties, especially during the second half of the year. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) pursued its efforts to limit the conflict and protect inhabitants from its consequences. The mandates of UNIFIL and of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights were extended, and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), headquartered in Jerusalem, continued to assist both peacekeeping operations in their tasks.

By decision 52/431 of 18 December, the General Assembly deferred consideration of the agenda item entitled "Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security" and included it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third (1998) session. The item had been inscribed yearly on the Assembly's agenda since 1981, following the bombing by Israel of a nuclear research centre near Baghdad [YUN 1981, p. 275].

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter VII (pp. 472–528)**

**Disarmament**

UN ROLE IN DISARMAMENT, 472: UN machinery, 472. NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT 477: Non-proliferation treaty, 478; Fissile material cut-off, 480; Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 480; Issues related to START and other bilateral agreements, 481; Nuclear explosive testing, 485; IAEA safeguards, 486; Nuclear safety and radioactive waste, 487; Prohibition of use of nuclear weapons, 489; Security assurances, 490; Advisory opinion of International Court of Justice, 492; Nuclear-weapon-free zones, 493. CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS, 499: Chemical weapons, 499; Bacteriological (biological) weapons, 501. CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND RELATED ISSUES, 503: Landmines, 503; Small arms, 506; Convention on excessively injurious conventional weapons and Protocols, 509; Practical disarmament, 510; Transparency, 511. REGIONAL AND OTHER APPROACHES TO DISARMAMENT, 515: Africa, 515; Asia and the Pacific, 517; Europe, 518; Latin America and the Caribbean, 519. OTHER DISARMAMENT ISSUES, 521: Prevention of an arms race in outer space, 521; Disarmament and development, 522; Science and technology, 523; Arms limitation and disarmament agreements, 524. STUDIES, INFORMATION AND TRAINING, 525

In 1997, the General Assembly reaffirmed the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, reiterating the highest priority accorded by the international community to nuclear disarmament. Major developments occurred during the year with regard to a number of important international instruments concerning both nuclear and conventional arms.

Stating its determination to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines that killed or maimed hundreds of innocent citizens, especially children, every week, the Assembly in 1997 invited all States to sign the 22-article Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction, adopted in September in Oslo, Norway.

On 29 April, the 1993 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction entered into force, and its monitoring Organization was launched on 29 May in The Hague, Netherlands.

During the year, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization continued its work, concentrating on verification issues. By 29 October 1997, the historic Treaty, adopted in 1996, had been signed by 148 States and ratified by seven, but had not entered into force.

Under consideration in 1997 was a 23-article draft Protocol for the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It dealt with issues of compliance, investigations, confidentiality, and scientific and technological issues, among others.

Preparations for a review conference in the year 2000 for the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continued. Bilateral arms negotiations were again the subject of General Assembly resolutions in 1997. Under the 1991 Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I), the United States and the Russian Federation continued to dismantle and destroy nuclear



warheads and deactivate delivery vehicles. On 21 March, the Presidents of both countries agreed that once START II had entered into force, they would immediately launch negotiations for START III.

The General Assembly again asked the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a draft four-article Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons. It also called for effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In addition to addressing issues related to nuclear and conventional weapons, nuclear-free zones and regional disarmament, the United Nations in 1997 also dealt with various aspects of disarmament verification, an arms race in outer space, small arms, observance of environmental norms in drafting disarmament agreements and dumping of radioactive wastes. The Assembly for the first time asked for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone entered into force on 27 March.

Preparatory work for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament continued in 1997, but no firm date for its convening was set.

Both the General Assembly's Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament held regular sessions during 1997, continuing work in a variety of areas to advance global and regional disarmament.

Expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament—the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community—was considered, with 14 outstanding applications. In 1996, the membership had been enlarged to 60, with the addition of 23 new members.

**Part One: Political and security questions**

**Chapter VIII (pp. 529–583)**

**Other political and security questions**

GENERAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, 529: Implementation of the 1970 Declaration, 529; Support for democracies, 530. REGIONAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY, 533: South Atlantic, 533; Indian Ocean, 534. DECOLONIZATION, 535: Implementation of 1960 Declaration, 535; Puerto Rico, 546; Territories under review, 546. INFORMATION, 565: Information in the service of humanity, 566; UN public information, 567. PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE, 571: Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, 571; Legal Subcommittee, 578. EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION, 582.

The United Nations in 1997 considered a variety of issues with specific political and security aspects, including those related to international peace and security, regional aspects of such security, the eradication of colonialism, information, the peaceful uses of outer space and the effects of atomic radiation.

An important development lay in United Nations support for national efforts to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies. The Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development was held in Bucharest, Romania, from 2 to 4 September. The Conference proposed to Governments guidelines for strengthening policies and principles and addressed recommendations to donor countries and the international community as well as to the UN system and international financial organizations. The General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to improve the capacity of the Organization to respond effectively to requests for support to achieve the goals of good governance and democratization.

The Assembly also acted on regional security issues concerning the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, based on reports of UN activities in those areas.

The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1997 again reviewed progress on implementing the 1960 Declaration. The General Assembly stressed that the eradication of colonialism by the year 2000 required the full and constructive cooperation of all parties concerned, and noted the particular circumstances which prevailed in the Territories under UN review, encouraging their political evolution towards self-determination.

The Secretary-General, in the context of his reform of the United Nations, announced a sweeping revamp of UN information policies, based on the recommendations of a special Task Force of independent experts. UN policies were to be reoriented to provide communications and outreach services to the media, non-governmental organizations and other disseminators, utilizing the latest media technology and techniques. The Assembly adopted resolutions on information in the service of humanity and on the public information policies and activities of the Organization. The Administrative Committee on Coordination issued a statement in which UN organizations committed themselves to assisting developing countries in redressing the information and technology gap and embraced the objective of establishing universal access to basic communications and information services.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space—the main UN body dealing with space issues—and its Scientific and Technical and Legal Subcommittees discussed ways of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and spin-off benefits of space technology. The Assembly agreed that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-III) should be convened in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on Outer Space.

The UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation continued its studies on atomic and ionizing radiation, analysing their effects on mankind and the environment. The Assembly requested the Committee to continue its work, including its activities to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation.

**Part Two: Human rights**

**Chapter I (pp. 587–625)**

**Promotion of human rights**

UN MACHINERY, 587: Commission on Human Rights, 587; Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 588; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 589; Strengthening UN action, 591. HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS, 593: General aspects, 593; Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Optional Protocols, 598; Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 599; Convention against racial discrimination, 601; Convention against torture, 604; Convention on elimination of discrimination against women, 605; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 605; Convention on migrant workers, 606; Convention on genocide, 607; Convention against apartheid, 607. OTHER ACTIVITIES, 607: Follow-up to 1993 World Conference, 607; Technical cooperation programme, 610; Public information, 617; Human rights education, 618; Culture of peace, 620; National institutions and regional arrangements, 622; Cooperation with UN human rights bodies, 625.

United Nations efforts to promote human rights continued in 1997 through the Commission on Human Rights, which marked its fiftieth anniversary, and its subsidiary body—the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities—and human rights treaty bodies, which reported on their work to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights carried out a programme of technical cooperation in human rights, including advisory services.

Human rights instruments promoted civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, and addressed racial discrimination, discrimination against women, the protection of children, and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In November, the Assembly proclaimed the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace. A project entitled "Towards a culture of peace", carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, dealt with education for peace, human rights, democracy, international understanding and tolerance; promotion of human rights and democracy: struggle against discrimination; cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue; and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

Throughout the year, preparations continued for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year implementation review of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, both of which would take place in 1998.

The Assembly approved the Secretary-General's appointment of Mary Robinson (Ireland) as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for a four-year term starting on 12 September.

**Part Two: Human rights**  
**Chapter II (pp. 626–699)**  
**Protection of human rights**

RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, 626: Third Decade against racism, 626. OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE, 634: Discrimination against minorities, 634; Religious intolerance, 636; HIV- and AIDS-related discrimination, 639. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, 639: The right to self-determination, 639; Democratic processes, 643; Administration of justice, 648; Other issues, 657. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, 668: Right to development, 668; Extreme poverty, 675; Right to adequate housing, 676; Right to food, 676; Scientific concerns, 677; Slavery and related issues, 678; Vulnerable groups, 680.

In 1997, the United Nations continued to protect human rights worldwide through efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination, and religious and other forms of intolerance; to ensure the right of people to self-determination; to establish and promote democratic societies through the implementation of civil and political rights; and to secure for all people economic, social and cultural rights.

Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary body, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, examined, among other questions, the impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations; independence of the judicial system; conditions during states of emergency; allegations of torture; extra-legal executions; human rights and extreme poverty; the right to adequate housing; environmental issues; violence against women; practices affecting the health of women and children; sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and protection of indigenous heritage and indigenous land rights.

Working groups considered arbitrary detention, enforced or involuntary disappearances, as well as the administration of justice, the right to development, contemporary forms of slavery, and indigenous populations.

The General Assembly, in December, decided to proclaim 26 June as United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

**Part Two: Human rights**  
**Chapter III (pp. 700–751)**  
**Human rights violations**

GENERAL ASPECTS, 700. AFRICA, 700: Burundi, 700; Congo (Republic of the Congo), 703; Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire), 703; Equatorial Guinea, 706; Nigeria, 707; Rwanda, 710; Sudan, 714. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 719: Afghanistan, 719; Bahrain, 722; Cambodia, 723; China, 723; Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 723; East Timor, 723; Iran, 724; Iraq, 726; Myanmar, 729. EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN, 733: Cyprus, 733; The former Yugoslavia, 733; Russian Federation, 745. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 745: Colombia, 745; Cuba, 746. MIDDLE EAST, 749: Lebanon, 749; Territories occupied by Israel, 750

Alleged violations of human rights on a large scale in a number of countries were examined during 1997 by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights and its Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, as well as by special bodies, special rapporteurs and independent experts appointed to examine some of those allegations.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter I (pp. 755–843)**

**Development policy and international economic cooperation**

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS, 755: Development and international economic cooperation, 755; Sustainable development, 790; Eradication of poverty, 820; Economic cooperation among developing countries, 825; Science and technology for development, 826. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRENDS AND POLICY, 831. DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, 835: Development planning, 835; Public administration, 835. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 836: Least developed countries, 836; Island developing countries, 839; Landlocked developing countries, 842.

The world economy grew by just over 3 per cent in 1997 for the second consecutive year and a further year of 3 per cent growth was forecast for 1998. Despite favourable economic growth, there were a number of negative developments. Following financial crises in several developing Asian economies, the international community had to mobilize more than \$100 billion in less than six months for financial rescue packages, and many countries saw their exchange rates challenged by market forces. Another major concern was Japan's difficulty in overcoming its own financial sector problems and launching a sustained economic expansion. Unemployment, particularly in much of Western Europe, was also a salient issue.

In June, the General Assembly held its nineteenth special session at which it adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21—a comprehensive plan of action for the sustainable development of the Earth into the twenty-first century adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. Participants in the special session—also known as Earth Summit+5—assessed progress made since 1992 in the implementation of Agenda 21 and made a commitment to ensuring that its next review in the year 2002 would demonstrate greater measurable progress in achieving sustainable development.

On 20 June, only three days before the start of Earth Summit+5, the Assembly adopted the Agenda for Development—an action-oriented document aimed at invigorating a renewed and strengthened partnership for development based on the imperatives of mutual benefits and genuine interdependence. An ad hoc working group of the Assembly had been working on the elaboration of the Agenda since early 1995, although the concept of such an agenda had originally been proposed by the Secretary-General in 1992.

The eradication of poverty—described as a fundamental goal of the international community—was a major theme in both the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Agenda for Development. In December, in a resolution on the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), the Assembly called on all donors to give high priority to poverty eradication in their assistance budgets and programmes. Having considered the role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty, the Assembly adopted a resolution in which it encouraged all involved in poverty eradication programmes to consider incorporating microcredit schemes in their strategies.

The need to take account of the development experiences and circumstances of countries in special situations—the countries of Africa and the least developed, small island developing and landlocked developing countries—was addressed by a number of United Nations bodies during 1997. Action on behalf

of those groups of countries was called for by the Assembly in both the Agenda for Development and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and their particular problems were discussed in the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Committee for Development Planning, and the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The Assembly decided to convene, in 2001, the Third UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

Noting the need to give impetus to international economic cooperation for development, particularly in the context of an effective follow-up to the Agenda for Development, the Assembly in December reaffirmed the need to strengthen constructive dialogue and genuine partnership. It requested the Assembly President to arrange a two-day high-level dialogue on the theme of the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence.



**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter II (pp. 844–895)**

**Operational activities for development**

SYSTEM-WIDE ACTIVITIES, 844: Financing of operational activities, 856. TECHNICAL COOPERATION THROUGH UNDP, 857: UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, 859; UNDP operational activities, 860; Programme planning and management, 871; Financing, 876. OTHER TECHNICAL COOPERATION, 882: UN activities, 882; UN Office for Project Services, 883; UN Volunteers, 886; Technical cooperation among developing countries, 889; UN Capital Development Fund, 894.

The total income of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—the central United Nations funding body for technical assistance to developing countries—amounted to \$2,323 million in 1997, down by 1 per cent from \$2,349 million in 1996. However, contributions to UNDP regular resources fell by 10.3 per cent to \$760.9 million, largely due to the reduced level of pledges for 1997 and the strength of the United States dollar. Total 1997 expenditures under regular resources rose to \$961 million from \$847 million in 1996.

UNDP continued to focus on assisting countries to develop the capacity to achieve sustainable human development, giving overriding priority to poverty eradication. To that end, its work lay in empowerment of the poor, including helping to provide them with access to productive assets such as credit, skills, legal rights, job opportunities, natural resources and links to national and international markets. Another priority area was strengthening good governance, by building capacities of Governments and civil society for policy formulation and programme implementation, and promoting democratization and market-oriented transitions. UNDP also remained concerned with building a more efficient and effective organization through internal reform.

The United Nations Office for Project Services remained fully self-financing, with no assessed budget funding. By 1997, it managed more than 2,000 projects in 146 countries, with project budgets in excess of \$1 billion.

In 1997, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) had the highest number of serving UNVs (3,620 as compared to 3,242 in 1996) and the most diversified programme in its 27-year history. It participated in preparations for the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in December.

Activities supported by the United Nations Capital Development Fund focused on local governance, decentralization, participation and microfinancing, among others. The Fund delivered \$38.2 million in projects in 1997, a drop of 9 per cent.

Having considered the operational activities for development of the UN system, particularly the follow-up to policy recommendations made by the Assembly in 1996, the Economic and Social Council in July reaffirmed the need for funding operational activities on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. The objective of capacity-building and its sustainability, the Council stated, should be an essential part of UN system operational activities at the country level, and those activities should be situation specific and consistent with national development plans. In December, the Assembly, also noting the need for increased

resources for operational activities for development, called for improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the UN system in delivering development assistance.

The High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (CTCDC), in May, reviewed progress made in implementing the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing TCDC. It stated that South-South cooperation should not be viewed as a substitute for but rather as a complement to North-South cooperation, and emphasized the need to promote triangular approaches to facilitate South-South programmes and projects. In December, the Assembly urged bodies of the UN system and other intergovernmental organizations to mainstream the implementation of TCDC modalities by considering them in the design and implementation of operational activities.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter III (pp. 896–932)**

**Humanitarian and special economic assistance**

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, 896: Strengthening coordination, 896; Resource mobilization, 898; White Helmets, 898; Mine clearance, 899; Humanitarian activities, 901. SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, 915: African economic recovery and development, 915; Other economic assistance, 920. DISASTER RELIEF, 925: International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, 926; Disaster assistance, 928; Chernobyl aftermath, 931.

In 1997, the United Nations, through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), continued to engage in a broad spectrum of relief operations to provide humanitarian and special economic assistance to States and population groups stricken by war, internal strife and environmental disasters. Consolidated inter-agency appeals in 1997 were ongoing in or launched for Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Chechnya in the Russian Federation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, countries of the Great Lakes region of Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan and the territories of the former Yugoslavia.

During the year, DHA helped 46 Member States in coping with 66 natural disasters and environmental emergencies.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter IV (pp. 933–960)**

**International trade, finance and transport**

INTERNATIONAL TRADE, 933: Trade policy, 938; Trade promotion and facilitation, 940; Commodities, 943; Consumer protection, 944. FINANCE, 945: Financial policy, 945; Financing of development, 953; Investment, technology and related financial issues, 955. TRANSPORT, 956: Maritime transport, 956; Transport of dangerous goods, 957. UNCTAD INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS, 958: UNCTAD programme, 958.

International trade, finance and transport International trade followed a generally upward path in 1997 after a significant slowdown in 1996, when the growth of world trade slipped abruptly, with all the regions of the world sharing in the deceleration, albeit to different degrees. The slowdown was associated with a diminishing of the initial effects of widespread trade liberalization, particularly in developing countries, as well as with a sharp deceleration of import growth in developed economies and with a weakening of commodity prices. After two years of sustained increases, many non-oil commodity prices began to decline in 1996, especially those of interest to developing countries.

The *Trade and Development Report, 1997*—produced by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the focal point within the Organization for the treatment of the interrelated issues of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development—focused on the growing income gaps among and within countries. Having considered the Report, the Trade and Development Board (TDB), UNCTAD's governing body, stated that those widening income gaps, to which elements of globalization might have contributed, were a challenge for policy makers everywhere.

The Economic and Social Council devoted its high-level segment in July to fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade. In agreed conclusions, the Council stated that the opportunities created by globalization should benefit all countries, and the risks associated with it should be managed and minimized. Having considered the Council's conclusions, the General Assembly, in December, requested UNCTAD to continue to examine the implications of investment issues for development.

In other action on financial issues, the Assembly recognized that durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries could contribute to strengthening the global economy and to the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and stressed the need for strengthened international cooperation to prevent currency crises, which negatively affected not only developing countries but also the international financial and monetary system. The Assembly decided to consider in 1999 the question of convening, not later than 2001, a high-level international forum on financing for development to further the global partnership for development.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) continued to assist developing countries to increase exports. During 1997, ITC had national projects in 40 countries with project delivery of \$13.2 million.

In the area of consumer protection, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to convene an interregional expert group to elaborate consumer protection guidelines that would cover sustainable consumption patterns.

In December, the Assembly approved TDB's recommendation that a diplomatic conference be convened to consider and adopt a convention on arrest of ships.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter V (pp. 961–1028)**

**Regional economic and social activities**

REGIONAL COOPERATION, 961. AFRICA, 961: Economic and social trends, 962; Activities in 1997, 964; Programme, administrative and organizational questions, 973; Cooperation between SADC and the United Nations, 979. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 981: Economic trends, 982; Activities in 1997, 983; Programme and organizational questions, 992; Subregional matters, 1000. EUROPE, 1001: Economic trends, 1003; Activities in 1997, 1004. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1007: Economic trends, 1007; Activities in 1997, 1009; Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, 1015; Programme and organizational questions, 1016. WESTERN ASIA, 1018: Economic and social trends, 1018; Activities in 1997, 1021; Programme and organizational questions, 1024

In 1997, the five United Nations regional commissions continued to promote economic and social development throughout the countries in their areas. Four met for regular sessions during the year at their headquarters: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (Bangkok, Thailand); the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (Geneva); and the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (Beirut, Lebanon). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), located in Santiago, Chile, did not meet in 1997, having held a biennial session the previous year [YUN 1996, p. 919].

All five commissions continued to implement reform measures in the context of the overall UN reform process. Those reforms aimed at rationalizing the work of those bodies, allowing them to be more responsive to global challenges, taking into account the specific interests and needs of each region. In 1997, ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA adopted resolutions to restructure their programmes and organization. ECE adopted the Declaration on the Strengthening of Economic Cooperation in Europe and Plan of Action. Those measures were endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, which also adopted a resolution on ECLAC in the context of UN reform.

During the year, ECE and ESCAP celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries, while ESCWA began preparations for the celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1999.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**  
**Chapter VI (pp. 1029–1038)**  
**Natural resources, energy and cartography**

NATURAL RESOURCES, 1029: Exploration, 1029; Water resources, 1029. ENERGY, 1032: Energy and sustainable development, 1032; Coordination, 1034; Nuclear energy, 1034. CARTOGRAPHY, 1037.

Ensuring the optimal use and protection of freshwater resources and establishing sustainable patterns of the production, distribution and consumption of energy were two primary areas of concern in 1997 of both the Commission on Sustainable Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly.

The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted in June by the Assembly, called for a dialogue on building a strategic approach for the sustainable use of fresh water, stating that it was a matter of urgent concern that more than one fifth of all people did not have access to safe drinking water, and that more than one half of humanity lacked adequate sanitation.

The new Programme also called for international cooperation for promoting energy conservation and improved energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and research, and the development and dissemination of innovative energy-related technology.

Having considered the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency in November, the General Assembly urged States to strive for international cooperation in carrying out the Agency's work in promoting the use of nuclear energy and applying measures to strengthen the safety of nuclear installations.

Two major cartographic conferences were held during the year—the Fourteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific in February and the Sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in June.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter VII (pp. 1039–1068)**

**Environment**

UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, 1039: UNEP Fund, 1045. GENERAL ASPECTS, 1046: UNCED follow-up, 1046; Environment and sustainable development, 1047. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND MECHANISMS, 1048: Climate change convention, 1048; Montreal protocol, 1049; Convention on Biological Diversity, 1050; Convention to combat desertification, 1051. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES, 1055: The atmosphere, 1055; Terrestrial ecosystems, 1056; Marine ecosystems, 1060; Conservation of wildlife, 1064; Protection against harmful products and wastes, 1064; Other matters, 1067.

In 1997, efforts continued towards improving the state of the environment, particularly through legally binding instruments and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which pursued the implementation of the environmental dimension of Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action adopted in 1992 for the sustainable development of the Earth into the twenty-first century.

During the year, UNEP presented the first report in the Global Environment Outlook series, which stated that, despite progress on several fronts, the environment had continued to degrade during the previous decade and environmental problems remained deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of nations in all regions.

The Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto, Japan, December) adopted the Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to reduce industrialized countries' collective emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases.

Parties to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer agreed, in September, on a phase-out schedule for methyl bromide, a fumigant and an ozone-depleting substance.

The UNEP Governing Council asked the Executive Director to convene a diplomatic conference to adopt and sign an international legally binding instrument for international action to reduce/eliminate the release of persistent organic pollutants, to be concluded preferably by 2000.

Progress was made at the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (Geneva, May) towards the adoption of an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals in International Trade.

The Economic and Social Council, in July, established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development to work towards a legally binding instrument on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The Forum held its first meeting in October. The Council also took action towards the eventual proclamation of an international year of mountains.

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, decided to accept the offer of Germany to host the permanent secretariat in Bonn and selected the International Fund for Agricultural Development to house the global mechanism.



The UNEP Governing Council held its nineteenth session (January/February and April) at which it adopted decisions relating to, among other matters, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP; UNEP's contribution to the General Assembly's 1997 special session; biosafety; the report on the Global Environment Outlook; chemicals management; water management; UNEP efforts to implement the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; and the UNEP governing structures.

The General Assembly elected Klaus Töpfer (Germany) as the new UNEP Executive Director for a four-year term effective 1 February 1998.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter VIII (pp. 1069–1106)**

**Population and human settlements**

POPULATION, 1069: Follow-up to the 1994 Conference on Population and Development, 1069; UN Population Fund, 1076; Other population activities, 1087. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, 1092: Follow-up to the 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), 1092; Commission on Human Settlements, 1093; Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, 1096; UN Centre for Human Settlements, 1098; Human settlements and political, economic and social issues, 1101; UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, 1105.

In mid-1997, the estimated world population stood at 5.85 billion, an increase of 1.4 per cent over the previous year. According to United Nations projections, the world population into the early decades of the twenty-first century would continue to show a marked slowing of growth, future role of the Commission, particularly in which was mainly attributed to declining fertility rates in a number of developing countries.

In 1997, UN work in population and human settlements was guided by strategies adopted at recent international conferences, notably the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). During the year, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the main UN body concerned with population activities, developed a set of indicators of performance in population programmes in order to measure progress in achieving ICPD goals, at both national and global levels. The main purpose was to establish a practical set of qualitative and quantitative markers to measure the impact of population programmes. The three core UNFPA programme areas were reproductive health, population and development strategies, and advocacy. It continued to collaborate with partners within and outside the UN system. In 1997, provisional UNFPA project expenditures totalled \$214.4 million.

The Commission on Population and Development, at its February session, adopted a number of decisions on population strategy. It considered the issue of international migration, which over the previous decade had been the population component most affected by the momentous changes in the world geopolitical order, resulting in significant population movements. Most of that movement had occurred in developed countries, where international migrants accounted for 4.1 per cent of the general population. Both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly took action on international migration and development, and called for UN bodies and Governments to examine the issue further.

UN activities in the area of human settlements were guided by follow-up action to Habitat II. The underlying principle of the concluding documents of Habitat II—the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda—was ensuring adequate shelter for all.

The Commission on Human Settlements, at its April/May session, addressed many of the recommendations and commitments made by Governments in the Habitat Agenda and, in December, the Assembly adopted a resolution on the monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda within the UN system.

The Commission reviewed the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted by the Assembly in 1988 to promote adequate shelter for all by 2000, with an operational focus on Governments. In 1997, the main operational activity of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in relation to the Strategy was in the application of urban and housing indicators. In December, the Assembly adopted a plan of action for implementing the Strategy and urged Governments to implement their national plans of action on human settlements and to apply the indicators for monitoring progress.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter IX (pp. 1107–1183)**

**Social policy, crime prevention and human resources development**

SOCIAL POLICY AND CULTURAL ISSUES, 1107: Social aspects of development, 1107; Follow-up to International Year of the Family, 1113; Persons with disabilities, 1114; Cultural development, 1118. CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE, 1121: Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 1121; UN Programme on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 1121; Transnational crime, 1126; Corruption, 1153; UN standards and norms, 1154; Other crime prevention and criminal justice issues, 1165. HUMAN RESOURCES, 1177: UN research and training institutes, 1177; Human resources for development, 1180; Education for all, 1181; University for Peace, 1182.

During 1997, the United Nations continued to undertake activities to advance social, cultural and human resource development, and to strengthen its crime prevention and criminal justice programme.

The Commission for Social Development met (New York, 25 February-6 March) under a revised mandate and new agenda since it was accorded primary responsibility for follow-up to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. The Commission focused on the Summit priority theme of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. In December, the General Assembly decided to hold a special session in 2000 to review and appraise the implementation of the Summit outcome. Other social issues addressed by the Assembly included follow-up to the 1994 International Year of the Family and implementation of the 1982 World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Regarding cultural development, the Assembly reviewed implementation of the World Decade for Cultural Development, 1988-1997, and addressed issues related to the return and restitution of cultural property. It also proclaimed the year 2000 as the International Year of Thanksgiving.

On the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which held its sixth session in April/May, the Assembly adopted a set of Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In other action on crime, the Assembly established a group of experts to begin the process of drafting an international convention against organized transnational crime. It also endorsed a new set of complementary provisions for the Model Treaty on Extradition and urged cooperation against corruption and bribery. Preparations were under way for the Tenth United Nations Congress for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, scheduled for 2000.

Human resources development was the focus of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations University. In 1997, the Assembly reviewed progress towards the goal of education for all.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter X (pp. (1184–1207)**

**Women**

FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, 1184: Critical areas of concern, 1184; Mainstreaming gender concerns, 1185; Enhancing UN capacity, 1187. WOMEN'S RIGHTS, 1191. UN MACHINERY, 1203

In 1997, United Nations efforts to advance the status of women and ensure their rights continued to focus on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a comprehensive plan for women's empowerment adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

The General Assembly took action on follow-up activities to the Conference, including ways to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to implement the Conference outcomes. In addition, the Assembly adopted resolutions on protecting women and ensuring their rights in a variety of situations, including women migrant workers, the girl child, women in rural areas, women in development, traditional practices affecting women's health and trafficking in women and girls.

The Economic and Social Council adopted a comprehensive set of agreed conclusions on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. It endorsed agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women on 4 of the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Council also addressed the situation of Palestinian women.

In 1997, the Commission on the Status of Women commemorated its fiftieth anniversary as the only intergovernmental body devoted to women's advancement. During its forty-first session (10-21 March), the Commission continued to monitor implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular the strategic objectives related to the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the Platform for Action. The 45-member Commission also addressed emerging issues related to women's equality, took action to protect the status of women in particular situations, and reviewed the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat (see also PART FIVE, Chapter III).

For the first time, in 1997 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held two 3-week annual sessions. At its sixteenth (13-31 January) and seventeenth (7-25 July) sessions, the Committee examined reports from States parties to the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter XI (pp. 1208–1229)**

**Children, youth and ageing persons**

CHILDREN, 1208: UN Children's Fund, 1208. YOUTH, 1223. AGEING PERSONS, 1225.

In 1997, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued its work to improve the situation of children worldwide, particularly those living in conditions of poverty. It reinforced coordination with Governments, civil society organizations and other entities to ensure that children received a just proportion of society's resources and that their rights were protected. Particular areas of concern in 1997 were strengthening health systems, reducing maternal mortality, improving basic education, and providing a secure and sanitary water supply.

UNICEF joined other UN bodies in continuing to promote adherence to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (see PART TWO, Chapter I), and was concerned with the protection of children's human rights (see PART TWO, Chapter II).

In its efforts to promote programmes and policies relating to youth, the United Nations focused in 1997 on implementation of the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which called on Governments to adopt a national youth policy and a cross-sectoral approach in addressing youth's concerns. The Economic and Social Council, in July, called on States, UN bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to implement the Programme of Action. In December, the General Assembly took similar action, and stressed the need to involve youth in implementing it.

The United Nations continued its activities in support of ageing persons, mainly through preparations for the International Year of Older Persons (1999). Both the Economic and Social Council, in July, and the Assembly, in December, encouraged States, the UN system and others to take advantage of the International Year to increase awareness of the challenge of the demographic ageing of societies, the individual and social needs of older persons and the contribution of older persons to societies.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter XII (pp. 1230–1251)**

**Refugees and displaced persons**

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, 1230: Programme policy, 1231; Future of UNHCR, 1235; Financial and administrative questions, 1235. REFUGEE PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE, 1237: Protection issues, 1237; Assistance measures, 1239; Regional activities, 1243.

In 1997, the number of persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) totalled 21 million. Of those, some 12 million were refugees, 3.3 million were repatriating refugees in the early stages of their reintegration, 3.6 million were internally displaced persons and 1.2 million others were humanitarian cases, for the most part victims of conflict. During the year, more than 676,000 refugees returned voluntarily to their countries of origin, highlighting the fact that repatriation was the preferred solution for many of the world's refugees.

Although there had been a distinct reduction in the number and scale of refugee-producing conflicts over the previous several years, the potential for large-scale displacement remained ever present in several regions and the increase in the number and intensity of ethnically based conflicts within States continued to be the subject of concern.

Africa continued to host the largest number of refugees of any continent in 1997, with some 7 million refugees, internally displaced persons and other people being helped by UNHCR. It was also in Africa that the number of people returning to their countries was the highest. The situation in the Great Lakes region remained a serious concern for UNHCR, due to continued violence against refugees and gross violations of human rights, which compelled UNHCR to suspend activities related to Rwandan refugees in the Congo in early September. Large-scale movements of more than 1.3 million returnees to Rwanda reduced the number of refugees in camps but created reintegration and security problems.

Some positive developments in other areas of Africa also eased the refugee situation during the year. After eight years of civil conflict, elections were held in Liberia in July, which led to the spontaneous return of some of the 500,000 refugees. Despite the slow pace of the peace process in Angola in 1997, some 53,000 Angolans spontaneously returned home. The repatriation of Togolese refugees officially ended in September, after almost all of the 300,000 refugees who had fled in 1993 returned to their country. In East Africa, the repatriation of some 65,000 Ethiopian refugees from the Sudan was also expected to finish by the end of 1997.

Elsewhere, the repatriation of Tajik refugees from Afghanistan restarted following the signing of a peace agreement in June, leading to the return of 6,600 refugees to Tajikistan despite a difficult security situation in both countries.

Security constraints also affected UNHCR operations in the North Caucasus, but over 20,000 internally displaced Chechens were assisted in returning home during 1997 from the surrounding republics in the Russian Federation. The repatriation from Bangladesh of Muslim refugees from Rakhine State in Myanmar

continued, leaving 21,000 refugees who did not wish to return. Following political violence and military conflict in 1997, over 60,000 Cambodians sought refuge in Thailand.

In Central America, there was further progress in repatriating Guatemalan refugees from Mexico. During the year, 3,573 Guatemalans returned.

Of the 3 million persons uprooted by the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, more refugees were able to be repatriated, particularly to Bosnia and Herzegovina where some 174,000 returned. Repatriation elsewhere in the region was slow. By the end of 1997, only 1,125 refugees had returned to Croatia from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The UNHCR Executive Committee, in October, considered repatriation challenges as its annual theme, including such issues as refugees from civil conflicts, forcible displacement within countries and threats to the institution of asylum, as well as threats to the security of humanitarian personnel. The Committee emphasized that refugee protection was primarily the responsibility of States and called on States to ensure that refugees were protected effectively.

Those issues were also raised by the Security Council, which in June expressed its grave concern at the increase in the use of force against refugees and other civilians in conflict situations, and called on those involved to comply with international law and to ensure the safety of refugees, displaced persons and other civilians, and to guarantee the unimpeded and safe access of UN and other humanitarian personnel to those in need.

The General Assembly also stressed that refugee protection was primarily the responsibility of States, whose cooperation and political resolve were required to enable UNHCR to fulfil its mandated functions.



**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter XIII (pp. 1252–1261)**

**Health, food and nutrition**

HEALTH, 1252. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE, 1256: Food aid, 1256; Food security, 1259. NUTRITION, 1260

In 1997, the United Nations continued to take action to promote human health, coordinate food aid and food security, and support research in nutrition.

Efforts to combat the AIDS epidemic remained a major concern for the United Nations. Those efforts were coordinated by the Joint and Cosponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, which focused on strengthening United Nations capacity to assist Governments and civil society to respond to HIV/AIDS. According to statistics made available in 1997, the epidemic continued to expand despite some advances in medical treatment. Another major health concern for the United Nations was the effects of tobacco on health. In that regard, the UN focal point on tobacco or health intensified dialogue with organizations of the UN system and Member States in order to strengthen tobacco control policies.

The World Food Programme (WFP)—a joint undertaking of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—provided food aid to 52.9 million people in 1997. WFP expenditure totalled \$1,199 million during the year, of which 69 per cent was spent for relief activities and 31 per cent for development activities. The total amount of food delivered was 2.7 million tons.

Follow-up to the 1996 World Food Summit included action at the country level and at headquarters level to promote food security.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter XIV (pp. 1262–1298)**

**International drug control**

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATION, 1262: Conventions, 1262; International Narcotics Control Board, 1263; United Nations activities, 1265. WORLD DRUG SITUATION, 1270. UN PROGRAMMES TO COMBAT DRUG ABUSE, 1279: UN International Drug Control Programme, 1279; System-wide Action Plan, 1287; Global Programme of Action, 1287. COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, 1288: Major issues in 1997, 1289.

During 1997, the United Nations, through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) of the Secretariat, continued to further strengthen international cooperation and increase efforts regarding the cultivation for illegal purposes, illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs. It also pursued ways to control and prevent the diversion of precursors and essential chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic and psychotropic substances, in accordance with obligations of States under the UN drug control conventions.

UNDCP continued to focus on regional, subregional and national strategies for drug abuse control, and provided Member States with legal assistance, as well as assistance in training personnel and in establishing or strengthening national drug detection laboratories. It reported on illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, assessing worldwide trends in illicit traffic and transit, including changes in methods and routes used, and recommended ways to improve the capacity of States to deal with all aspects of the drug problem. The Programme's responsibilities also included monitoring the implementation of the 1990 Global Programme of Action by States and UN entities and carrying out activities under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, which was also established in 1990.

INCB continued to oversee the implementation of the three major international drug control conventions, analysed the drug situation worldwide, drew attention to gaps and weaknesses in national control and treaty compliance, and made suggestions and recommendations for improvements at the national and international levels. The Board stressed the importance of demand reduction measures in addition to supply reduction, and drew Governments' attention to their responsibilities to start effective and comprehensive prevention programmes, encouraging them to seek the cooperation of the media, which had always been an influential force in public education. For the first time, it established assessments of annual licit domestic requirements for psychotropic substances for countries that had not submitted them.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs—the main UN policy-making body on drug control matters—acted as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly on drug control, to be convened in 1998, and devoted several days of its annual session to that task. It also addressed a number of substantive issues, primarily the reduction of both the demand for and the supply of narcotic drugs and illicit drug trafficking issues. The Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East adopted the Baku Accord on Regional Cooperation against Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, Distribution and Consumption of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors. In July,

the Economic and Social Council urged Member States to implement the Accord and to promote public campaigns to enhance public awareness of drug abuse and drug prevention programmes.

**Part Three: Economic and social questions**

**Chapter XV (pp. 1299–1307)**

**Statistics**

WORK OF STATISTICAL COMMISSION, 1299: Economic statistics, 1299; Demographic and social statistics, 1303; Technical cooperation, 1305; Other statistical programmes, 1305.

In 1997, further work was undertaken by the United Nations in the area of statistics, with special attention paid to international cooperation. At its February session, the Statistical Commission, the 24-member body that guided UN statistical activities, adopted revised international recommendations for statistics in the fields of construction, international trade and international migration, as well as population and housing censuses. In regard to trade statistics, the Commission recommended that all countries using an international commodity description and coding system supply their international trade statistics to the United Nations Statistics Division. Preparations continued for the 2000 world population and housing census, and the Commission endorsed the provisional principles and recommendations for the national censuses which were to be carried out by national authorities with UN assistance for developing countries. As a follow-up to recent major UN conferences, the Commission adopted 15 indicators, known as the Minimum National Social Data Set, as a way of measuring progress in certain areas of social development.

**Part Four: Legal questions**  
**Chapter I (pp. 1311–1319)**  
**International Court of Justice**

Judicial work of the Court, 1311

In 1997, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered one Judgment and made two Orders. It had nine contentious cases before it. During the year, Counter-Claims were presented in two of the pending cases.

On 6 February, the Court elected Judge Stephen M. Schwebel of the United States as President and Judge Christopher G. Weeramantry of Sri Lanka as Vice-President of the Court, each for a term of three years.

In a 27 October address to the General Assembly, the President of the Court noted that, for the first time in its history, ICJ had made a working visit to a site of a dispute when it spent four days travelling to locations along the Danube River. The case, brought by special agreement between Hungary and Slovakia, concerned a project for the joint construction of dams on the River. The Judgment on the case was given on 24 September.

The President observed that the Court was gratified that its role as a partner in preventive diplomacy, and not only a judicial last resort in settling disputes among Member States, was continuing to develop. It was important, in assessing the Court's work, to take account not only of disputes that had resulted in Judgments, but also of cases that had resulted in negotiated settlements.

**Part Four: Legal questions**  
**Chapter II (pp. 1320–1332)**  
**International tribunals**

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, 1320: The Chambers, 1320; Office of the Prosecutor, 1324; The Registry, 1324; Financing ICTY, 1325. INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA, 1327: The Chambers, 1327; Office of the Prosecutor, 1328; The Registry, 1329; Financing ICTR, 1329

Two international tribunals, created by the United Nations to prosecute persons responsible for mass violation of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, continued their work during 1997. The International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (ICTY), based in The Hague (Netherlands), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (ICTR), based in Arusha (United Republic of Tanzania), had a common Prosecutor and a common Appeals Chamber.

ICTY, which comprised the Judiciary of 11 Judges assigned to two Trial Chambers and one Appeals Chamber, the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry, consisting of a Judicial Department and an Administrative Department, continued to carry out investigations and prosecutions. It also began an exhumation programme in early July. The first ICTY Judges completed their four-year terms in 1997; in May, the General Assembly elected new Judges to replace them as of 17 November.

ICTR, consisting of the Chambers (two Trial Chambers and an Appeals Chamber), the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry, continued to hand down indictments and hold trial proceedings. The construction of a second courtroom, which became operational on 19 August, expedited its work.

**Part Four: Legal questions**

**Chapter III (pp. 1333–1354)**

**Legal aspects of international political relations**

INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION, 1333: State succession, 1335; State responsibility, 1335; International liability, 1335; Non-navigational uses of international watercourses, 1336; Unilateral acts of States, 1343. INTERNATIONAL STATE RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, 1343: Principles of international negotiations, 1343; Jurisdictional immunities of States and their property, 1344; International criminal jurisdiction, 1345; Safety and security of UN and associated personnel, 1346; Measures to eliminate terrorism, 1346. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, 1352: Protection of diplomats, 1352. TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS, 1353: Reservations to treaties, 1353.

In 1997, the United Nations continued work on legal aspects of international political and State relations.

The International Law Commission, which marked its fiftieth anniversary in 1997, completed the first reading of draft articles on nationality of natural persons in relation to the succession of States and of the preliminary conclusions on reservations to normative multilateral treaties, including human rights treaties. The General Assembly, in May, adopted the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

The creation of an international criminal court to try individuals accused of international crimes came closer to fruition in 1997 with the successful conclusion of three meetings of the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The Assembly accepted Italy's invitation to host the 1998 diplomatic conference to adopt the statute.

As to measures to eliminate international terrorism, the Assembly, in December, adopted the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and urged all States to sign and ratify, accept, approve or accede to it.

The Secretary-General and the Assembly continued to work towards enhancing the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives.

**Part Four: Legal questions**  
**Chapter IV (pp. 1355–1365)**  
**Law of the Sea**

UN CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA, 1355: Institutions created by the Convention, 1357; Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, 1364.

In 1997, the United Nations continued to pay special attention to the implementation of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, an important instrument for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security, as well as for sustainable use of the world's seas and oceans. In November, the General Assembly reaffirmed its decision to undertake an annual review and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention and other developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea. It also noted with satisfaction the work of the International Seabed Authority and approved an agreement concerning the relationship between the United Nations and the Authority. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which was established in 1996 to settle disputes concerning the interpretation of the Convention, adopted its Rules, a resolution on internal judicial practice and guidelines for the preparation and presentation of cases before the Tribunal. Also in 1997, another important institution, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, was established. During its second session, the Commission adopted its *modus operandi* and rules of procedure.



**Part Four: Legal questions**  
**Chapter V (pp. 1366–1385)**  
**Other legal questions**

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, 1366: Strengthening the role of the United Nations, 1366; UN Decade of International Law, 1370; Host country relations, 1375. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW, 1377: International trade law, 1377.

In 1997, the United Nations continued its work on various aspects of international law, including international economic law.

The Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization met in January/February and discussed proposals for the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. It invited the General Assembly to consider an organizational framework for addressing the implementation of Charter provisions relating to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII.

In anticipation of the end of the Decade of International Law in 1999, the Assembly approved the arrangements made by the Netherlands and the Russian Federation to mark both the end of the Decade and the centennial of the first International Peace Conference, held in 1899.

The Assembly adopted a programme of assistance in the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law. Various UN organs and agencies contributed to the programme by providing information on the latest developments of international law and through fellowships, seminars, symposia and workshops.

The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law adopted the Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency.

The Committee on Relations with the Host Country discussed travel restrictions imposed by the host country, the parking situation for diplomatic vehicles and related matters.

**Part Five: Institutional, administrative and budgetary questions**

**Chapter I (pp. 1389–1411)**

**United Nations reform**

PROGRAMME OF REFORM, 1389: Managerial reform and oversight, 1394. INTERGOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY, 1401: Review of Security Council membership and related matters, 1406; Revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, 1407. INNOVATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS, 1410.

United Nations reform efforts in response to changes in the external environment took a major step forward in 1997 when the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly his two-track plan for managerial and institutional transformation. The first phase involved initiatives and decisions falling within his authority and which could be taken immediately, while the second targeted a longer-term programme of reform. The reforms focused on strengthening the Secretariat's leadership capacity, increasing its administrative efficiency, reducing non-programme costs and turning the savings into a "dividend for development" and reshaping the Organization's substantive work programmes. He also proposed that a Millennium Assembly be held in the year 2000 to review the role of the Organization vis-a-vis the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Assembly, in December, adopted those reforms recommended for immediate implementation and invited the Secretary-General to elaborate on his proposals for more fundamental change.

The Secretary-General's reform proposals complemented a number of measures proposed by the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System to streamline the Organization, which the Assembly adopted in July. The Secretary-General also submitted proposals for procurement reform at Headquarters.

The Economic and Social Council continued to review its subsidiary bodies and to consider the reform of the regional commissions. The Secretary-General presented to the Council proposals for generating funds globally.

Also as part of the continuing reform efforts, initiatives were taken to strengthen the Organization's internal and external oversight mechanisms. In July, the Assembly identified areas to which the oversight machinery should give early attention.

**Part Five: Institutional, administrative and budgetary questions**  
**Chapter II (pp. 1412–1449)**  
**United Nations financing and programming**

FINANCIAL SITUATION, 1412. UN BUDGET, 1415: Results-based budgeting, 1415; Budget for 1994-1995, 1415; Budget for 1996-1997, 1415; Budget for 1998-1999, 1419. CONTRIBUTIONS, 1439: Assessments, 1439. ACCOUNTS AND AUDITING, 1445.

Over the course of 1997, the financial situation of the United Nations showed no sign of improvement. The Secretary-General reported that the high levels of unpaid assessments for the regular budget, international tribunals and peacekeeping operations were undermining the financial stability and liquidity of the Organization. Unpaid assessments at the end of 1997 totalled \$2 billion. The High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations continued its search for solutions but reached no agreed conclusions. However, the Secretary-General, in his proposed measures for United Nations reform, recommended the establishment of a revolving credit fund capitalized up to \$1 billion and funded through voluntary contributions, as one means of providing liquidity as an advance on Member States' contributions.

The General Assembly, in December, adopted revised appropriations of \$2.5 billion for the 1996-1997 biennium, \$61.2 million less than it had originally approved, and budget appropriations of \$2.5 billion for 1998-1999. The Assembly also considered the Secretary-General's proposals for reducing non-programme costs by 35 per cent and redirecting the funds to development and for introducing results-based budgeting.

The Committee on Contributions continued to review the methodology of the scale of assessments. In December, the Assembly decided on the scale of assessments for the period 1998-2000.

The Assembly accepted the financial reports and audited financial statements and audit opinions of the Board of Auditors for the 1995-1996 biennium on the United Nations, on UN peacekeeping operations and on UN entities. The Board submitted to the Assembly proposals for improving the implementation of its recommendations.

**Part Five: Institutional, administrative and budgetary questions**

**Chapter III (pp. 1450–1480)**

**United Nations staff**

APPOINTMENTS AND TERMS OF OFFICE, 1450. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, 1451: International Civil Service Commission, 1451; Remuneration issues, 1451. OTHER STAFF MATTERS, 1457: Personnel policies, 1457; Travel-related matters, 1477; UN Joint Staff Pension Fund, 1478; Administration of justice, 1479

In 1997, the General Assembly considered a number of questions related to the conditions of service of United Nations staff members, some of which resulted from the Secretary-General's proposals for UN reform. The Assembly established the post of Deputy Secretary-General as an integral part of the Office of the Secretary-General. It also considered the draft Code of Conduct for United Nations staff submitted by the Secretary-General. In other action, the Assembly agreed on measures to make the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General more transparent and recommended uniform terms and term limits for heads of programmes, funds and other bodies of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. During the year, the Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council were seized with the problem of the safety and security of UN personnel on peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. The Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to commission a study on the subject.

The International Civil Service Commission made recommendations to the Assembly on matters related to the conditions of service of United Nations staff, including the base/floor salary scale, staff assessment and performance management, the education grant, appointments of limited duration and the non-pensionable component of salaries. The Assembly reviewed the implementation of the first cycle of the new performance appraisal system in the Secretariat and encouraged the Secretary-General to refine and simplify it. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to phase out the acceptance of certain types of gratis personnel.

The principal of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund stood at \$14 billion at the end of 1997. In December, the Assembly admitted the International Seabed Authority to membership in the Fund as of 1 January 1998.

**Part Five: Institutional, administrative and budgetary questions**

**Chapter IV (pp. 1481–1513)**

**Institutional and administrative matters**

INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY, 1481: General Assembly, 1481; Security Council, 1484; Economic and Social Council, 1484. COORDINATION, MONITORING AND COOPERATION, 1486: Institutional mechanisms, 1486; Other coordination matters, 1488. THE UN AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, 1491: Cooperation with organizations, 1491; Granting of observer status, 1496; Participation of organizations in UN work, 1496. CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS, 1499. UN INFORMATION SYSTEMS, 1506. OTHER MATTERS, 1509: Common services, 1509; UN catering services, 1510; Outsourcing practices, 1511; UN access control system, 1511; Interagency security, 1511; UN premises and property, 1512; UN Postal Administration, 1513; International years, 1513

During 1997, the United Nations continued to review a number of institutional and administrative matters. The General Assembly held its fifty-second session and its resumed fifty-first session. It also convened its tenth emergency special and nineteenth special sessions. The Assembly granted observer status to the Andean Community.

During the year, the Security Council held 117 formal meetings to deal with regional conflicts, peacekeeping operations and a wide variety of other issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Economic and Social Council held its 1997 organizational session in January, February and May, and its substantive session in June, July, October and December, adopting resolutions on a wide range of economic, social and related issues. It also granted consultative status to a number of non-governmental organizations.

Other UN bodies concerned with administrative and coordination matters included the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Joint Inspection Unit.

The Committee on Conferences examined requests for changes to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1997. It recommended measures to improve the utilization of conference-servicing resources, including the introduction of new technologies, and to limit and control documentation, particularly in the light of the UN reform process. In the area of information systems and telecommunications, the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution on the need to harmonize and improve UN informatics systems. Progress was reported in the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System.