

Reform of the United Nations after the Cold War

- Reforms and improvement are necessary for any organisation to perform better. The UN is also not an exception.
- There have been demands to bring reforms in the UN. Two demands have been raised i.e. reform of the organisation's structures and processes and, a review of the issues that fall within the jurisdiction of the organisation.
- On the reform of structures and processes, there has been the demand to increase the membership of permanent and non-permanent in UN Security Council.
- On the issues within the jurisdiction of the UN, some countries want the organisation to play a greater role in peace and security missions.
- While some other countries want the role of UN to be confined to development and humanitarian work.

Reform of Structures and Processes of the UN

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- A resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1992 over the reforms in the security council. The resolution reflected three main complaints.
- To look into the complaints over the restructuring of the UN, on 1st January, 1997, the UN Secretary General Kofi Arman initiated an inquiry into how the UN should be reformed.
- Criteria for inclusion of a new member was decided. Some of them were that a new member must be a major economic and military power, a substantial contributor to the UN budget etc.
- Different governments saw advantages in some criteria and disadvantages in others depending on their interests and aspirations. A demand to abolish the veto power altogether was also raised. Many perceived the veto to be in conflict with the concept of democracy and sovereign equality in the UN.
- Permanent members have two privileges i.e. veto power and permanency in the security council.
- By veto power means that if a permanent member cast a veto in a negative manner then it may state the decision.
- Without veto power, there is the danger that the great powers would lose interest in the world body and without their support the body would be ineffective.

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Jurisdiction of the UN

- A meeting was held in September 2005 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the United Nation and to review the situation.
- The leaders in this meeting decided some steps that should be taken to make the UN more relevant in the changing content. .
- Steps include establishment of a Human Rights Council, creation of a democracy fund, an agreement to wind up the trusteeship council etc.

India and the UN Reforms

- India has always supported the restructuring of the United Nations. It believes that a strengthened and revitalised UN is desirable in a changing world.
- The most important demand of India is regarding the restructuring of the security council. It supports an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members.
- It also argues that an expanded council, with more representative, will enjoy greater support in the world community.
- India itself wishes to be a permanent member in a restructured UN. India is the world's largest democracy and the second most populous country in the world.
- The country's economic emergence on the world stage is another factor that perhaps justifies India's claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council.
- Despite India's wish to be a permanent veto holding member of the UN, some countries question its inclusion. They are concerned about Indo-Pak relations, India's nuclear capabilities etc.