



CURRENT AFFAIRS



Argasia Education PVT. Ltd. (GST NO.-09AAPCAI478E1ZH)
Address: Basement C59 Noida, opposite to Priyagold Building gate, Sector 02,
Pocket I, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201301, CONTACT NO:-8448440231

Date – 27 APRIL 2023

UNSC REFORMS

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and the topic details “UNSC Reforms”. The topic “UNSC Reforms” has relevance in the International Relations section for the UPSC CSE exam.

Relevance of UNSC Reforms

For Prelims:

What is UNSC?

What is the composition of the UNSC?

What are the functions and powers of the UNSC?

For Mains:

GS 2: International Relations

What is the need for UNSC reforms?

What is the progress made for UNSC reforms?

What is the significance of India as a permanent UNSC member?

Way Forward

Why in the news?

India has boldly asserted that the UNSC charter is anachronistic and needs to change its stance and accommodate present realities.

What is UNSC?

UNSC stands for the United Nations Security Council. It is one of the six main organs of the United Nations and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

The Council has the power to authorise military action, impose sanctions, and establish peacekeeping missions, among other responsibilities.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or an act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it peacefully and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorise the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

What is the composition of the UNSC?

The Security Council has 15 members:

1. 5 of which are permanent members (the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom)
2. and 10 of which are elected for two-year terms. These 10-member seats are divided per region in the world.

What are the functions and powers of the UNSC?

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

1. to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
2. to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
3. to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
4. to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
5. to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
6. to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
7. to take military action against an aggressor;
8. to recommend the admission of new Members;
9. to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";
10. to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

What is the need for UNSC reforms?

- **Reflecting present realities:** The need for UN Security Council reforms arises from the fact that the world has changed significantly since the formation of the United Nations in 1945.
 1. The current structure of the Security Council no longer reflects the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, as it remains dominated by the five permanent members, who have the power of veto.
- **Adequate and equitable representation of the countries:** This has resulted in a lack of representation and participation of many countries, particularly those from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, in decision-making on issues that affect them.
 1. Presently UK, France, and Russia are part of Eurasia and occupy three seats but bigger continents like Africa and Latin America have no permanent representation in the UNSC.
- **Democratic reforms:** The current structure has been criticised for being undemocratic and not reflecting the interests of the majority of the world's population.
- **Objective stance on issues:** It is often seen that UNSC has become a victim of power rivalries between two blocs. Russia & China on one side and USA, UK, and France on one side.
 1. The ideological divide between these two blocs has prevented a unanimous voice on issues that are of global importance.

What is the progress made for UNSC reforms?

There have been some developments in recent years that indicate some progress toward reform:

- **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN):** In 2008, the UN General Assembly established the IGN process to engage member states in discussions on UNSC reform. Since then, there have been several rounds of negotiations, and the process has helped to identify areas of common ground among the member states.
- **G4 group:** The G4 group, comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, has been advocating for UNSC reform for several years.
- **African Union (AU) position:** The AU has been calling for reform of the UNSC to better represent the interests of African nations. The AU's position is for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats for African nations.
- **The Coffee Club, also known as the Uniting for Consensus (UFC):** It is a group that emerged in the 1990s to oppose the expansion of permanent seats in the UN Security Council. Led by Italy, the Coffee Club aims to counter the bids for permanent seats by the G4 nations and calls for consensus before any decision is made on the size and structure of the Security Council.

What is the significance of India as a permanent UNSC member?

India has always voiced in favour of a permanent seat in the UN with veto power. The importance of India being a part of UNSC is as follows:

- **Global decision-making:** As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), India would have a more significant role in shaping global decision-making and playing a prominent role in maintaining international peace and security.
- **Representation of the global south:** It would address the issue of under-representation of developing countries in the Council. As the world's largest democracy, with a population of over 1.3 billion people and a growing economy, India's permanent membership would ensure that the voices and interests of the global South are better represented in the UNSC.
- **Larger role in dealing with the new age challenges:** India's permanent membership would give it greater leverage in dealing with regional and international issues. India could play a more active role in addressing challenges such as terrorism, climate change, and nuclear disarmament.
- **Peace Keeping efforts:** India has consistently contributed to the UN peacekeeping efforts. Despite this, it has no say in how the peace-making forces will be deployed and how the mandate will be exercised. India's inclusion in the UNSC would also give India more say in decisions regarding peacekeeping operations and interventions in conflict zones.
- **Recognition as an emerging power:** India's permanent membership would also be a recognition of its growing global importance and its commitment to multilateralism. India's permanent membership in the UNSC would be an affirmation of its place as a key player in shaping the future of the world.

Way Forward

The issue of UN Security Council reform has been a topic of debate for several decades, and progress toward reaching a consensus on the way forward has been slow. However, there are several steps that could be taken to advance the process:

- **Consensus building:** There is a need to develop consensus which can be achieved through dialogue and negotiations among the member states to find common ground on the key issues.
- **Increase representation:** There is a need to address this by increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members from underrepresented regions.
- **Change the veto power:** The veto power of the permanent members has been a source of controversy in the UN Security Council. One solution could be to limit the use of the veto power or introduce a veto override mechanism.
- **Improve transparency:** The decision-making process in the UNSC can often be opaque, with important decisions taken behind closed doors. Greater transparency in the decision-making process could improve accountability and build trust among the member states.

In conclusion, achieving UN Security Council reform will require a concerted effort by the member states. India can take the lead to build the required consensus by taking alongside other like-minded countries. This not only strengthens India's claim but also promotes the interest of other countries whose interests can be upheld by India's permanent membership.

Sources:

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

Mohit Pratap Singh