



Antonio Guterres: 2nd Term UN Secretary General

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Why in News

The **United Nations General Assembly** appointed **Antonio Guterres as the ninth UN Secretary General (UNSG) for a second term** beginning 1st January, 2022 and ending on 31st 2026.

India had expressed its **support for the re-election of Guterres as UN Chief.**

Key Points

- **About Antonio Guterres:**
 - Guterres took **oath of office on 1st January, 2017** and his first term **ends on 31st December 2021.**
 - Guterres **served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** for a decade from **June 2005 to December 2015.**
 - He was the **former Prime minister of Portugal.**
- **Appointment:**
 - Under the UN Charter, the Secretary-General is **appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.**
 - **Each Secretary-General has the option of a second term** if they can garner enough support from Member states.
 - Guterres was elected **after a reformed selection process that included a public informal dialogue session** in the General Assembly, involving civil society representatives, aimed at ensuring transparency and inclusivity.

- **UN Charter:**
 - The **Charter of the United Nations** is the **founding document** of the United Nations. It was signed **on 26th June 1945**, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force on 24th October 1945.
 - The UN can take action on a wide variety of issues due to its **unique international character** and the powers vested in its Charter, which is considered an international treaty.
 - As such, the UN Charter is **an instrument of international law**, and **UN Member States are bound by it**. The UN Charter codifies the major principles of international relations, from sovereign equality of States to the prohibition of the use of force in international relations.
- **About UNGA:**
 - The General Assembly occupies a central position as the **chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ** of the United Nations.
 - Composed of all **193 Members** of the United Nations, it **provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion** of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter.
 - It also plays a significant **role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law**.
- **UN Security Council:**
 - Established by the **UN charter in 1945**, the Security Council has the primary responsibility of **maintaining international peace and security**.
 - The Security Council has **15 members**.
 - **There are five permanent members:** the United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom.
 - The **non-permanent members** of the Security Council are elected for a term of **two years**. Recently, **India has been elected**.
 - Each member of the **Security Council has one vote**. Decisions of the Security Council on matters are made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the **concurring votes of the permanent members**. A "No" vote from one of the five permanent members blocks the passage of the resolution.
 - Any member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that member are specially affected.

- **Challenges Pertaining to UN:**

- UNGA has **no control over veto power** exercised by UNSC and it cannot take any decisive action against permanent members of UNSC.
- The 15-member Security Council is by far the most powerful arm of the United Nations. However, the veto power is used by **five permanent countries** to serve the strategic interest of **themselves and their allies**.
- The **UN charter is vague** in defining the duties of the secretary general, the United Nations' top official.
- Recently, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has been criticised by the US on account of mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently suspended its financial contribution to WHO.
 - Also, WHO has been under pressure from the US government to adopt an approach that favours interests of US pharma companies.
 - WHO is **a specialised agency of the UN**.

United Nations

- **Establishment:**

The **United Nations (UN)** is an international organization founded in **1945**.

- **Members:**

- It is currently **made up of 193 Member States**.
- **India is a charter member of the United Nations** and participates in all of its specialised agencies and organizations.

- **Activities:**

Its activities include maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.

- **Main Organs:**

- **The General Assembly,**
- **The Security Council,**
- **The Economic and Social Council,**
- **The Trusteeship Council,**
- **The International Court of Justice,**
- **The UN Secretariat.**

Way Forward

- The UN must act as a catalyst and a platform for more inclusive, networked and effective forms of **multilateralism**.
- The power to transform the current situation into a better world and future for all depends on everyone everywhere and can only be done successfully if the efforts towards a common agenda for the benefit of humanity and the planet is resolved.

Source: IE