

## **UNICEF**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

UNICEF, acronym of United Nations Children's Fund, formerly (1946–53) United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund special program of the United Nations (UN) devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children. UNICEF was created in 1946 to provide relief to children in countries devastated by World War II. After 1950 the fund directed its efforts toward general programs for the improvement of children's welfare, particularly in less-developed countries and in various emergency situations. The organization's broader mission was reflected in the name it adopted in 1953, the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965. It is headquartered in New York City. UNICEF has concentrated much of its effort in areas in which relatively small expenditures can have a significant impact on the lives of the most disadvantaged children, such as the prevention and treatment of disease. In keeping with this strategy, UNICEF supports immunization programs for childhood diseases and programs to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS; it also provides funding for health services, educational facilities, and other welfare services. Since 1996 UNICEF programs have been guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which affirms the right of all children to "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health." UNICEF's activities are financed by both government and private contributions

### **UNICEF FOUNDED:**

In the aftermath of World War II, the General Assembly of the United Nations votes to establish the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), an organization to help provide relief and support to children living in countries devastated by the war. After the food and medical crisis of the late 1940s passed, UNICEF continued its role as a relief organization for the children of troubled nations and during the 1970s grew into a vocal advocate of children's rights. During the 1980s, UNICEF assisted the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. After its introduction to the U.N. General Assembly in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child became the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, and UNICEF played a key role in ensuring its enforcement.

Of the 184 member states of the United Nations, only two countries have failed to ratify the treaty—Somalia and the United States. Somalia does not currently have an internationally recognized government, so ratification is impossible, and the United States, which was one of the original signatories of the convention, has failed to ratify the treaty because of concerns about its potential impact on national sovereignty and the parent-child Relationship.

### **STRUCTURE:**

- Over 190 countries & territories.
- More than 200 country offices.
- Headquarters in NEW YORK.
- 36 Members executive board, by UNITED NATIONS ECOSOC (Economic & social council), for three years term.
- Executive director has 5 year mandate.

### **FUNCTIONS:**

UNICEF provides services in primary health-care, nutrition, basic education, sanitation and women & development in developing countries.

#### **The main functions performed by UNICEF are as following:**

- UNICEF works for the protection of children in respect of their survival, health, and wellbeing. This is done in cooperation with individuals, civic groups, governments and the private sector.
- It provides funds for training the personnel, including health and sanitation workers, teachers and nutritionists. Universal Child Immunizations against preventable diseases by 1990 was one of the leading goals of UNICEF.
- It provides technical supplies, equipment and other aids, ranging from paper for textbooks, to equipment and medicines to health clinics, to pipes and pumps for bringing clean water to villages.
- It assists governments to plan, develop and extend community-based services in the fields of maternal and child health, nutrition along with provision of clean water and sanitation.
- It provides help to children and mothers in emergencies arising from natural calamities, civil strife and epidemics.
- It makes effort to prevent diseases like T.B., malaria, eye diseases, skin diseases etc.
- UNICEF performs various other functions. As the sole agency for children, it speaks on behalf of children and upholds the Convention on the Rights of the Child and works for its implementation. UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Prize

for peace in the year 1965 and the Indira Gandhi Prize for peace in 1989.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF UNICEF:**

The basic objectives of the UNICEF include eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day, reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, to achieve universal primary education and to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

The aims and objectives of UNICEF could be understood as follows:

- To advocate for the protection of children rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF initiates programs and projects to achieve these aims and objectives.
- UNICEF, the United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, strives to promote children emotional and physical well-being in underdeveloped and disaster-affected areas. It is currently active in more than 190 countries and promotes health and development, child protection, social inclusion and gender equality.
- Ongoing health programs include mass immunizations to prevent disease, the promotion and protection of breastfeeding for improved nourishment in infants, the fight against HIV/AIDS to reduce infection and care for the infected and the procurement of healthy drinking water and nourishment.
- UNICEF recognizes the importance of education for personal development and advancement and promotes equal opportunities for both genders.
- Advocating for children rights, the fund strives to protect children from violence and abuse in the family, child labour, and child trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation.
- During natural disasters, warfare and crises, UNICEF provides humanitarian relief, shelter, nourishment and psychosocial support.
- When circumstances allow, the fund organizes educational facilities for children in affected areas.
- UNICEF runs separate programs for the well-being of adolescents, including health, HIV education and prevention and the acquisition of skills and abilities for financial independence.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF UNICEF:**

The four point programme against preventable diseases:

- (i) Immunization,
- (ii) Oral dehydration
- (iii) Advocating breast feeding
- (iv) Monitoring growth.

This has reduced diseases considerably.

UNICEF celebrated 1979 as the International Year of the Child for focusing people's attention on the rights of children. It has supported AIDS education and helps families of its victims. Health centres and maternity homes have been established.

Poverty stricken, disabled, demented and victims of other emergencies are provided special protection.

With UNICEF's efforts a world summit for children was held at UN headquarters attended by representatives of 150 countries. Thus along with other UN agencies UNICEF has achieved considerable success in achieving its goals, but there is still a lot more to be done.

Thus, UNICEF acts as a prominent UN body and as a humanitarian organisation, directing its efforts in various areas to help combat many of the violations against children that occur across the globe. Focus areas remain in the reduction of disease and malnutrition related deaths, dealing with HIV/AIDS sufferers, preventing the exploitation of children, ensuring equal access to education and providing sufficient support in times of emergency and conflict. Despite its humanitarian occasional criticism, UNICEF still devoted towards its purpose and efforts in handling any shortcomings.