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## **Activity 4. What has the UN achieved?**

**Purpose:** to familiarize students with UN accomplishments and the work of its agencies.

### **Standards:**

Social Studies: NCSS standards

V: Individuals, Groups and Institutions

IX: Global Connections

English Language Arts: NCTE standards

1: Reading for understanding

4: Communication skills

8: Developing research skills

12: Applying language skills

### **Materials:**

Activity 4 Student Materials: What has the UN achieved?

### **Description:**

1. Ask students what they think the main accomplishments of the UN have been.
2. Have students read “What has the UN achieved?” What information did they find particularly new or surprising?
3. Have students use the links in the “What has the UN achieved?” document to read case studies of the UN’s work in such areas as health, the environment, women, human rights, health, emergencies, and others.
4. Have small groups of students present their findings on UN achievements in various areas to the class. Encourage creativity in presentations. For example, students could dramatize a case study that they read, or present it as a “talk show” interview. They could use posters and art materials to highlight important areas of work.
5. In 2000, the UN’s member states agreed to achieve the following Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015:

## The Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

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study they researched to one or more of these goals.

What will it take in order for the world community to actually achieve these goals?

Have students read about the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and progress being made toward reaching them, at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

### **Follow-up activity**

Much of the work of the UN is carried out through its specialized agencies, funds, and programs. Have students research the work of these members of the UN system. Ones of particular interest might include:

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

World Health Organization (WHO) [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

United Nations Environment Programme [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

World Food Programme [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

International Labour Organization [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)

United Nations Development Programme [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

United Nations Development Fund for Women [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

A full listing can be found at [www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org).

## Activity 4 Student Materials

### What has the UN achieved?

The UN has played a crucial role in raising world awareness of critical issues, often by bringing together experts in a particular field, holding conferences, gathering data, and publishing studies. It coordinates the world's response to issues that transcend national borders. In doing so, the UN and its specialized agencies, programs and funds have had a significant impact on the well-being of the world's people. Some of the areas in which the UN works include:

**Peace:** Inexpensive and light-weight small arms have been used in 46 out of 49 major conflicts since 1990, causing millions of deaths – 90% of these civilians. The UN held a conference to raise awareness of this issue in July 2001. It has supported innovative programs such as one in Albania, carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, in which the UN contributes to building roads and schools in exchange for weapons. Over 6,000 weapons have been turned in, and over \$1 million in development projects have been funded in the town of Gramsh.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/peace/peace3.html>.

**Labor:** Child labor is a problem in many countries, particularly where economic opportunities for adults are scarce. Child labor can cause permanent damage to children's health, and deprive them of their right to education. Through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is working to fund education, health, nutrition and recreation programs for the 800,000 children involved in agricultural labor in Central America. Similar programs have reduced child labor in the garment industry in Bangladesh and the carpet industry in Pakistan.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/labor/labor2.html>.

**Sustainable development:** The UN sponsored World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002, helped raise awareness of the fact that issues of economic development, water, health, energy, agriculture and biodiversity are all inter-related. A small project in the village of Bosso, on Lake Chad in eastern Niger, demonstrates how sustainable fishing practices both increase income and safeguard livelihoods. With the help of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a fishermen's cooperative was formed in Bosso to provide training and equipment. With improved equipment, fishermen have been able to increase the amount of fish they can catch, thus increasing their income. This allows them to throw back smaller fish that they might previously have kept. Fish stocks are no longer being depleted, ensuring a source of food and income for villagers in the future.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/sustainable/index.html>

**Culture:** People everywhere want to preserve their cultural heritage, which is closely linked to their identity. But sites of cultural and natural significance around the world are under threat

from development, war, and tourism. The United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) has inscribed many of these unique sites on the World Heritage List. In Cambodia, the ruins of Angkor's temples and sculptures have been subject to looting, and to damage during civil conflict in 1974. Today, as a result of its World Heritage status, Angkor receives international funding and is the biggest conservation park in the world.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/culture/culture2.html>

**Health:** In 1988, a coalition of UN agencies began a global campaign to eradicate polio, a crippling disease that was prevalent on five continents. Under the leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), nearly 2 billion children have been vaccinated against polio. Three million people who would have been crippled by polio are walking because of those immunizations. The UN declaration of "Days of Tranquility", or truces in war-affected areas, has allowed medical supplies to reach children who need it most. Today, polio only exists in parts of sub-Saharan African and the Indian sub-continent. The UN aims to eliminate polio by 2005.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/health/health3.html>

**AIDS:** The UN held a Special Session in 2001 to mobilize political leadership and resources to fight AIDS. UNAIDS, a partnership of UN agencies, is leading to the global fight to stop the spread of AIDS. In Uganda, 1.9 million children – 10% of the country's population – have lost their parents to AIDS. A UN agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, is working with a grassroots organization, the Ugandan Women's Effort to Save Orphans, to provide loans and extra income to families who will care for AIDS orphans.

To read more about this project, visit <http://www.un.org/works/aids/aids1.html>

More case studies and stories of projects that work in the fields of business, children, development, education, emergencies, environment, health, HIV/AIDS, human rights, labor, peace and women are available at:

<http://www.un.org/works/>