



UNITED NATIONS  
VISITOR  
CENTRE

[visit.un.org](http://visit.un.org) • Facebook: UN Visitors Centre • Twitter: @VisitUN

# FACT SHEET

## UNITED NATIONS EMBLEM AND FLAG



United Nations flag © UN Photo/Mark Garten

### UNITED NATIONS EMBLEM

The first emblem associated with the United Nations was designed by the Presentation Branch of the United States Office of Strategic Services in 1945 in response to the request for a logo for the San Francisco Conference, during which the UN Charter was drafted. The design consisted of a circular representation of a map of the world, extending to the 40th parallel south, and with the 100th meridian west of Greenwich in the lower vertical position.

The Secretary-General subsequently encouraged the Assembly to adopt a design that would become the official seal and emblem of the United Nations. On 7 December 1946, the Assembly approved a modified version of the San Francisco design. The revised emblem consists of a map of the world on a

polar azimuthally equidistant projection surrounded by two olive branches. These two symbols speak for themselves: the olive branch is a symbol of peace, while the world map represents the Organization in its quest to attain world peace.

### UNITED NATIONS FLAG

At the second regular session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General submitted a memorandum stating the need for a United Nations Flag, to be used by United Nations Committees and Commissions around world, as well as at United Nations Headquarters and Information Centres.

On 20 October 1947, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that states that the Flag of the United Nations “shall be the official emblem adopted by the General Assembly centered on a light blue ground.” The light blue colour, however, has no special significance.

Although the UN flag may be freely displayed to demonstrate support for the UN and its work, use of the UN emblem, name or initials for commercial purposes is restricted by General Assembly resolution 92(I), which was adopted in 1946. The resolution states that the UN emblem and seal could not be used without the authorization of the Secretary-General in order to prevent its misuse.

Learn more: [research.un.org/en/maps/flags](http://research.un.org/en/maps/flags)

*For information only—this fact-sheet has been issued by:*

**PUBLIC INQUIRIES, UN VISITORS CENTRE • UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS  
NEW YORK, NY 10017 • 1-212-963-4475**

[visit.un.org](http://visit.un.org) • Facebook: UNVisitorsCentre • Twitter: @VisitUN