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Q1(d)

What measures have been undertaken by the United Nations for its reforms?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · PSIR GS 2 · 10 marks · United Nations: Envisaged role and actual record; specialized UN agencies

United Nations: Envisaged role and actual record; specialized UN agencies - aims and functioning; need for UN reforms.

Core demand of the question

- What measures have been undertaken by the United Nations for its reforms?
- Keep the answer within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Annan-era packages and the 2005 Summit are the main reform waves.

HRC, **Peacebuilding Commission**, R2P, and SDGs are concrete measures.

Assembly revitalisation and Council working-method notes are process reforms.

Permanent-seat and veto change has not occurred.

Reform is real at the margins and blocked at the Charter's core.

Introduction

The United Nations has tried to reform process, organs, and peace tools without opening a new San Francisco conference. Measures are incremental. The Security Council's core remains the hardest lock.

Body

Secretariat and management

- Kofi Annan's agendas, including **In Larger Freedom**, pushed coherence, a stronger Secretary-General, and results-based management.
- The **Peacebuilding Commission** (2005) and later peacekeeping reviews tried to link war, politics, and recovery.
- Human Resources, procurement, and whistle-blower rules were recurring administrative reforms.

Intergovernmental measures

- The **2005 World Summit** endorsed the Responsibility to Protect as a political commitment, not a Charter amendment.
- **Human Rights Council (2006)** replaced the discredited Commission.
- ECOSOC, UNDS, and the 2030 Agenda (SDGs) recast development coordination.
- **General Assembly revitalisation:** earlier elections of the President, better scheduling, and pressure for Security Council working methods (note S/2017/507 and later notes).

The unfinished core

- G4, Uniting for Consensus, and African Ezulwini claims seek Council expansion. No Charter amendment on permanent seats or the veto has passed.
- Veto restraint initiatives and codes of conduct are political pledges, not law.

Flow diagram

UN reform reform -> Annan management peacebuilding

UN reform -> HRC R2P SDGs

UN reform -> Council expansion stalled

Annan management peacebuilding -> Partial change

HRC R2P SDGs -> Partial change

Council expansion stalled -> Limits

Conclusion

UN reform has produced new bodies, development goals, human-rights machinery, and peacebuilding tools. It has not reconstituted the Security Council. Measures exist. The veto structure still decides war and peace.

Facts & figures

2005 World Summit

Endorsed R2P, created the **Peacebuilding Commission** track, and restated development and rights reform.

Human Rights Council

Replaced the Commission in 2006 as a Universal Periodic Review body.

G4

India, Japan, Germany, and Brazil campaign for permanent Council seats; no amendment yet.

In Larger Freedom

Kofi Annan's 2005 report tying security, development, and human rights as one reform agenda.