Who Does What?

Trace authority and responsibility across the UN system

SS24.CWI.5a "Explain the structure and roles of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programs."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each UN body named in the passage, then circle the words that describe its role or authority. Number the bodies that could help with the cyclone response.

A Cyclone Tests the UN System

1 After a powerful cyclone strikes two neighboring countries, a port closes and families cross the border for shelter. Both governments ask the United Nations for help. The UN is an organization of sovereign member states, not a world government. In its General Assembly, all 193 member states have a seat and one vote. Delegates can debate the disaster, approve the UN budget, and recommend joint action, but most Assembly resolutions are not binding. The Security Council has 15 members, including five permanent members with veto power. Its main responsibility is international peace and security, and some of its decisions can be legally binding.

2 The UN Secretariat, led by the Secretary-General, carries out daily work and helps coordinate responses across the UN system. Its Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs helps organize emergency relief with governments and aid groups. Other parts of the UN system have distinct jobs. The World Health Organization, or WHO, is a specialized agency that supports countries with public health guidance and disease monitoring after the cyclone. The World Food Programme, or WFP, is a UN program that delivers food assistance. UNICEF, a UN fund, helps children obtain safe water, nutrition, and other essential services. These bodies work with national authorities rather than replace them.

3 Suppose floodwater contaminates wells while damaged roads block food trucks. The affected governments could request support, and the Secretariat could help connect officials with relief groups. WHO could advise health ministries on preventing waterborne illness, while WFP could arrange food deliveries where access is possible. UNICEF could support clean water supplies for children and families. If a border dispute over aid routes threatens peace, the Security Council could discuss that security problem. The General Assembly could debate wider cooperation and recommend steps to member states. These roles overlap in a response, but each body has a different source of authority or area of expertise.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the General Assembly and Security Council differ in membership and authority?

2. Why would the Secretariat and WHO have different jobs after the cyclone?

3. If families need food and safe water, which UN program and fund could help? Explain each role.

4. Why might a border dispute over aid routes involve the Security Council, while contaminated wells involve WHO?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine an earthquake damages schools, disrupts medical supplies, and sparks a border dispute that threatens peace. In four or five sentences, explain how at least four UN bodies from the passage could respond, including which can recommend action and which handles security.

ANSWER KEY

Who Does What?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each UN body named in the passage, then circle the words that describe its role or authority. Number the bodies that could help with the cyclone response. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the General Assembly and Security Council differ in membership and authority?	**All 193 member states have a General Assembly vote, and most of its resolutions are not binding. The Security Council has 15 members, including five permanent members with veto power, and some of its decisions can be legally binding.**
2	Why would the Secretariat and WHO have different jobs after the cyclone?	**The Secretariat helps coordinate the response, while WHO provides public health guidance and disease monitoring as a specialized agency.**
3	If families need food and safe water, which UN program and fund could help? Explain each role.	**WFP, a UN program, could deliver food assistance. UNICEF, a UN fund, could help families obtain safe water.**
4	Why might a border dispute over aid routes involve the Security Council, while contaminated wells involve WHO?	**A dispute that threatens peace falls within the Security Council's responsibility for international peace and security. WHO supports countries with public health guidance, including advice on preventing waterborne illness.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The General Assembly could recommend that member states cooperate on earthquake relief, but most of its resolutions would not be binding. The Security Council could address the border dispute because threats to international peace and security fall within its responsibility. The Secretariat could help coordinate relief with the affected governments and aid groups. WHO could advise health ministries as they plan how to restore access to medical care. UNICEF could help children obtain safe water and other essential services while local authorities repair schools.

Accept other accurate roles supported by the passage. Responses should distinguish the General Assembly's recommendations from the Security Council's security role and identify concrete work for at least two other UN bodies.