I. Goals and Purposes

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) represents the interests of states in international relations and in the UN which do not wish to belong to any military alliance and stand for the end of colonialism, the realization of the right of self-determination of peoples (→ Self-Determination, Right of), equal rights of races and peoples, nuclear disarmament and peaceful international cooperation of all peoples and states.

This Movement plays a central role in focusing the UN more towards development issues and its politicization (→ Development Cooperation of the UN).
Non-Aligned Movement and the UN

System). It sees its significance above all in giving important impulses to the Group of 77 (→ Group of 77 and the UN).

Goals and objectives of the Movement are elaborated at Summit Conferences and laid down in conference documents. Summit Conferences are conducted as a rule every third year. Once each year a Coordinating Bureau meets on ministerial level (Ministerial Meeting) or – if required – on the level of the UN Ambassadors of member states in New York (→ Permanent Missions). These conferences are used to preparing Summit Conferences of the Movement as well as to coordinating its foreign policy before the annual sessions of the → General Assembly of the UN.

The Movement has its origin in the Bandung Conference, which took place from 18 to 24 April 1955, and was intended to increase the international political role, as well as to improve the international economic and social situation, of the Third World countries. 1 September 1961 is regarded as the date of foundation of the Movement when the representatives of 25 states met and united in Belgrade. In 2001 the Movement included 114 states, with the membership of Yugoslavia being suspended.

At the Summit Conferences as well as at meetings of the Coordinating Bureau the member states of the Movement discuss initiatives and common positions with regard to basic issues of international policy which are on the agenda of the General Assembly of the UN, of Special Sessions of the General Assembly as well as of meetings of other principal organs of the UN (→ Principal Organs, Subsidiary Organs, Treaty Bodies; → UN-System). With respect to important issues of international relations the members of the Non-Aligned Movement appear within the UN – as a rule – as a group of states (→ Groups and Groupings in the UN) and explain the common initiatives and positions. Usually this is done by the representative of the state which is chairing the Movement at the moment. World economic and especially development issues are introduced in the UN organs and supported by the Movement through the Group of 77.

II. The Role of the Non-Aligned Movement in the UN

Inside and outside the UN, the group of non-aligned states appears to the great powers as a great political challenge. This is as true today as it was during the East-West-Conflict and the Cold War. Especially within the UN the fact alone plays an important role that the group of non-aligned states represents about two thirds of the member states of the Organization, thus it has the possibility to influence essentially the content of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly (→ Resolution, Declaration, Decision). Non-aligned states were and still are undertaking great efforts to increase their influence and their representation in the various organs and bodies of the UN. In particular they are demanding equal participation of the non-aligned states in the → Security Council, especially concerning the rights and duties of the permanent members of the council. They stand for a reform of the UN-Charter (→ Charter of the UN; → Reform of the UN). They are in favor of strengthening the role and functioning of the General Assembly as the main deliberative and decision-making organ of the UN and call for the restoration of the balance between its role and that of the Security Council.

The collapse of the socialist camp and the USSR had serious repercussions on the NAM as well. One of the most important co-founders of the Movement, Yugoslavia, also disintegrated. After the ending of the confrontation of the two main military blocs some voices within the Movement have been raised expressing doubts about the further relevance of the NAM. In view of the changes in world politics a discussion about determining new main goals and principals on which the NAM should concentrate started at the Summits of the Movement.